

SPOTLIGHT ON ESSEX COUNTY

Spring 2010

Ahead of the herd

Woodslee sheep farm
serves niche market

No place like home

Life on the streets and the struggle to stay off them

Local inventors

Contemporary explorers pushing the boundaries

New features: Fiction • Poetry • Book Reviews

SPOTLIGHT ON ESSEX COUNTY

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COVER PHOTO BY
JENNIFER CRANSTON



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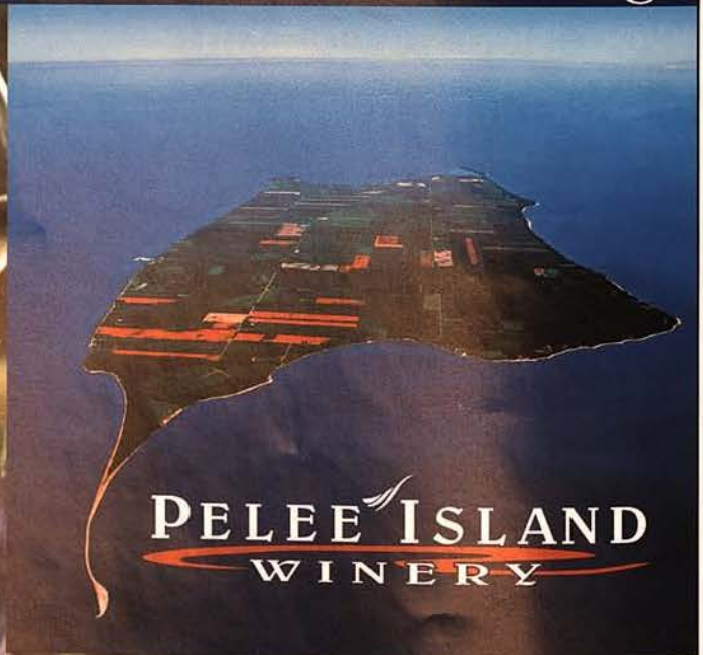
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Editor's Note

Traditionally spring is a time for new beginnings, hope and rejuvenation. Join us in this issue of *Spotlight on Essex County* where we look at survival and new life in all its forms.

Discover how flying squirrels and wild turkeys are getting a second chance in Essex County and explore the ever-changing experience and natural adventure of Point Pelee National Park.

Learn about the challenges and triumphs of local foster parents as they dedicate their homes and their hearts to giving children security and hope for their future.

Did you know that Essex County is loaded with inventors? Meet some of these creative and entrepreneurial people as they bring innovation to the game of golf, artistic expression, and even sleep apnea. They bring new and exciting ideas and products to the region and to the world.

Let yourself be moved by the struggle to survive without a home, and take comfort in the chance at a new life. A young man shares his story of life on the streets.

Fast times, big money, midnight intrigue and black market booze were a large part of Essex County during prohibition in the 1920s. See how this exciting era in our history is being preserved by local historians, writers and collectors.

This issue of *Spotlight* has some new features that are sure to capture your interest. Check out some fresh new fiction written by a local university student. Let our book review section help you choose your next great read.

Wine and food are two of our region's greatest creations. Let a local wine-maker share with you one of his favourite recipes and, of course, the wine to go with it.

Essex County is a place of promise, fresh starts and constant improvement. I hope that *Spotlight* will inspire you to take pride in all that we are and all that we are becoming.

Let this season find you embracing all of the hope, anticipation and energy that spring brings with it.

Jennifer Cranston
Editor

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No place like HOME

By Jennifer Cranston

"The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned."

—Maya Angelou, American poet and writer

Cameron Bastien just turned 17 years old. He attends high school in Windsor and hopes someday to be a broadcast journalist. He's tall and thin with red hair and striking blue eyes. He wears a toque and rides a skateboard, just like thousands of other young men his age. He is articulate and likes to write. A self-taught guitar player, he also writes most of his own music. He spent much of his childhood in Belle River and Stoney Point. He liked being outside and often played in a conservation area near his home. He even took tae kwon do lessons for a couple of years.

If he wants to graduate with kids his age, Cameron will have to work hard. He has a lot of catching up to do. He wasn't in school last year. He was homeless.

Cameron was candid and frank when he took us on a tour of his life on the street and shared his story with *Spotlight*.

Cameron Bastien was 14 years old when his home life became unstable. He listened to music that his parents disapproved of and admits he was experimenting with marijuana, which contributed to the conflict. He left home repeatedly. Sometimes he was kicked out, other times he ran away. The summer he was 15 he left his family's home in Stoney Point for the last time.

"Arguments got really heated and out of control," he explains. Whether he was kicked out or ran away is up for debate. Cameron and his mother would probably disagree. Regardless of who made the final decision, he blames himself for being on the street.

"I always felt like I put myself in the situation. Like my attitude at home, I was pretty stubborn. I kind of feel like I put it on myself," he says.

A friend drove Cameron to Windsor where he stayed with another friend for a while. He stayed with his paternal grandparents in Belle River from September until after Christmas. That didn't work out and it was back to Windsor.

He house-hopped (also known as sofa-surfing) for about 10 months, sometimes sleeping outside for days or weeks between houses.

"That's the most disgusting house I've ever lived in," he says pointing to a burned-out house with boarded up windows in the west end of Windsor. "Cat urine everywhere, clothes and garbage everywhere, always people partying there. It was really a crash pad pretty much."

His experiences in that house illustrate some of the dangers that come with staying with acquaintances and strangers.

"I was actually living there when people broke in and burned it down. I left one night because the guy had some drama going on. I came back to that," he says pointing to the sooty stains around the windows.

People had broken into the house during the day and there was a confrontation with the regular tenant. Cameron suspected that the situation would escalate, so he took his possessions and left.

When there wasn't a friend or acquaintance to put him up for the night, Cameron took to the streets.

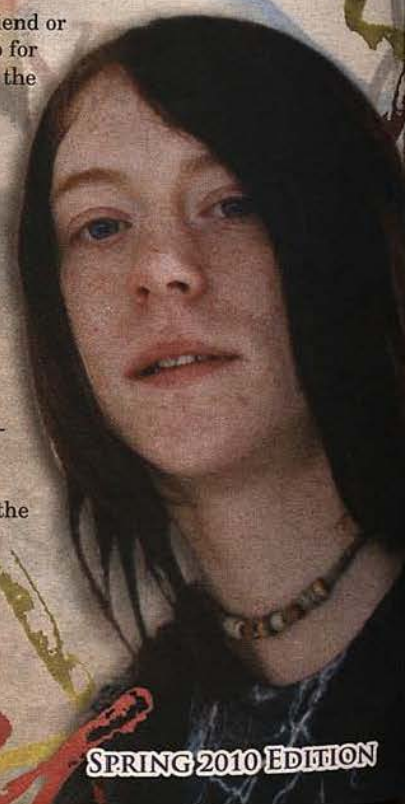
"Alleys have a lot of protection from wind and rain," he explains.

He points out parks and playgrounds where he would sometimes sleep.

"At the top of the slide there's always that little area where you can sit down. It's always a good place to curl up. A lot of parks have like a hard plastic siding on each side so it blocks the wind."

There is a tree close to the docks in Sandwich that Cameron discovered fit his body just right. It's not far from a warehouse that was easy to get into.

The aban-



done Grace Hospital also provided him with shelter for a night or two.

"I was usually alone," he explains. "I didn't like to sleep where there were other people. You don't know who to trust. People get desperate. They'll steal the shirt right off your back," he says.

He recounts times when people would not only try to steal from him while he slept, but even try to take things from his pockets when he was awake. He once got into a fistfight over a package of cigarettes.

"I was clutching them. They were all I had."

There is an underpass at University Ave. W. that is thickly plastered with graffiti. In the summertime parties are frequently held there. Cameron explains that many homeless people gather there too. He would go there sometimes with his friend.

He points to a ledge that has been carved into a very steep incline.

"We used to make a little campfire on that ledge there," he recalls. "I've used that same ledge as a bed. I remember one night when I was sleeping, I slipped and rolled halfway down the hill."

After some searching he is able to find his "tag" on the colour-stained concrete. A tag is something the "painter" uses repeatedly in different places to mark that he was there. Cameron's is a stylized "EVERLOST."

"The ultimate fear is eating," he says as he sips coffee from a paper cup. "You never know where your next meal is coming from."

Cameron admits to going as long as two days or more without food. Sometimes he would use food banks or steal small items from stores. Panhandling was his main source of income.

"If you ask 20 or 30 people for bus fare, you can end up with \$10," he explains.

But the money didn't always go towards food.

"There was one point where I was being really stupid. I'd just bum 'bus fare' all morning until I had enough to buy a forty of Olde English (malt liquor)," he admits.

"I really don't like to drink anymore," he adds.

The worst part of being on the street for Cameron was the stark realization that came to him one cold February night. He was sleeping outside that night.

"The hardest thing is laying there in the cold, just trying to cuddle yourself up with a sweater, whatever you've got. You realize that you have nothing... it just hits you like a ton of bricks, you have nowhere to go," he said. "You're in a city with 300,000 people and you're out there alone and it sucks. You can't sleep half the time because you just want the morning to come."

Cameron never stayed in a shelter. During the last few months of his time on the street he discovered the Street Health Homeless Initiative. He went there the first time for help with obtaining a health card. A man named Patty gave him coffee and a slice of pie, bus vouchers and food bank information. The program even has facilities where a person can get cleaned up and shave.

"Patty is a great guy," Cameron smiles. "It's a good place for sure, but there's no places like that out in Stoney Point. You've got to get to Windsor if you want to get the help when you're homeless, because there's nothing out in the county for you. You've got to be in a city."

This past September, Cameron found a home. The parents of a friend took him in for a night and told him he could stay. They built him his own bedroom, enrolled him in school and helped him get social assistance.

"I'm stable now," he says.

Cameron's family is still not part of his life. His parents are divorced and both remarried. He has one older brother and four younger siblings.

"I don't really talk to them any more."

He says he had some "really good talks" with his dad

over the summer but hasn't spoken to him since.

Cameron says he learned some valuable life lessons on the street.

"You've got to appreciate what little you have – always. I don't think I will ever take anything for granted again," he says.

It makes him angry when he hears other kids talk about leaving home.

"I bitch at kids all the time at school," he says. "When I hear them at 14 or 15 saying 'I want to move out so bad,' I just tell them, 'No, you don't want to move out. You don't want to leave. You want to appreciate what you have right now because you're not going to have it in a couple of years.' Just the everyday things – having a roof over your head, getting fed, getting clothes. Life isn't free and you don't realize that until you have nothing."

The Services

"People tend to think of homelessness only happening in major urban centres," says Becky Parent of the Homeless Coalition of Windsor and Essex County. "It just isn't true. People in the county fall into the category of 'hidden homeless.' They have to be; there are no services or shelters."

"Hidden homeless" is a term used to describe people who are off the radar of the service agencies. Some of these people simply house-hop, never asking for any formal assistance. Many of them are single mothers who deliberately hide their situation for fear of losing their children. Many county folk who find themselves without shelter will head to Windsor or another city to take advantage of better availability of resources and better outdoor shelter.

There are 36 organizations in the Homeless Coalition, which was founded in 2002. Much of what the coalition and its partner agencies do involves helping those at risk of becoming homeless to keep their shelter.

"Our definition of homeless includes people at risk of becoming homeless," explains Parent. "It's not always about finding a home. It's about keeping it, maintaining an income and finding inexpensive food."

Parent explains some of the challenges facing county residents at risk.

"There is very little affordable housing in the county," she says. "And, especially in the county, transportation is an issue."

Finding fresh, inexpensive food can also be a problem. Parent says people with very low incomes and little access to transportation will often end up doing their grocery shopping in variety stores.

"Homelessness is about people like you and me," she says. "Many of us are only a couple of paycheques away from homelessness."

Everyone is at risk.

"Seniors with fixed incomes are at risk. Just (paying) utilities can be crippling," says Parent. "Single parents don't want to apply for assistance because there's a fear of losing their kids. Most youth aren't choosing to be homeless because it's cool; they have no choice. It's often safer on the street than in their parents' home."

There are some services in the county but they are few in number and overtaxed. Most communities have food banks. In Amherstburg there is the Food and Fellowship Mission where hot meals are available in addition to the traditional food bank. Churches often pick up as much slack as they can.

With offices in Harrow, Kingsville and Leamington, the Youth and Family Resource Network operates a program called THRIVE – Transitional Housing Resources Improving Vitality in Essex. THRIVE operates throughout the county. They offer transitional housing, affordable housing and referrals to services like Keep the Heat that can help free up money for rent.

"A lot of it is getting them affordable housing," says Connie Day, client services and support worker for THRIVE.

There lies the biggest challenge. Even people who have asked for assistance and receive Ontario Works will have a difficult time finding affordable housing in

the
county.

"The average single mother with one child is getting about \$913 (per month)," she says.

According to the Ontario Works rate chart for Dec. 2009, a single adult is only allowed \$585 per month.

"The hardest part of my job is when there are no options left," says Day. "We will help them call family and friends. Couch-surfing is better than the alternative, especially in the winter."

Most service providers, including police, often have no choice but to refer people to services and shelters in Windsor. When working people have to go to Windsor for services or shelter, they often run the risk of losing their jobs too.

Like the other organizations in the Homeless Coalition, THRIVE works with existing agencies in an effort to help people find all the services available to them.

"All the partnerships we can make, we have made," says Day.

The Struggle

The names in this segment have been changed to protect the privacy of those involved.

Shannon and her husband Phil are currently struggling to keep Phil's brother Steve off the streets after he recently attempted to overdose on a cocktail of prescription and non-prescription drugs.

"We got a text message that said, 'That's enough, I'm done. Tell my girls I love them.' We found him on his couch," says Shannon. "We looked through the window. We thought he was unconscious as his breathing seemed shallow."

Steve did not move or respond to loud and excessive banging on the doors and windows, so police officers broke down the door to get to him. When he refused medical treatment, police handcuffed him so that EMS workers could get him to the hospital. A person does not have the option of refusing treatment when suicide is suspected. Shannon and Phil requested police assistance to get Steve into the ambulance.

Following a physical injury that prevented him from working and a difficult divorce, Steve developed depression. The trigger that sent him over the edge was a letter from his mortgage lender's lawyer informing him that foreclosure would begin Feb. 4.

While Steve was in the psychiatric ward, Shannon and Phil started looking for ways to help. They started at the house. The door needed to be repaired and the cat needed to be fed.

When they found Steve's income statements, they discovered that his WSIB (Workplace Safety Insurance Board) benefits amounted to only \$556 a month.

Ontario Works was topping that up by \$29, bringing his total monthly income to \$585, plus drug benefits.

"He had signed up for a second careers program in the late summer, early fall," Shannon explains. "He was supposed to begin in January. Ontario Works re-assessed the program in late fall. Hundreds of people who had been approved were now denied."

Steve was one of those people. At 57 years old he didn't see another way out. He felt he was unemployable and had nothing to offer.

"His hope was gone," she says.

Shannon and Phil were able to hold off the foreclosure until Feb. 12, but they did not have the thousands of dollars needed to pay off the debt. Even if they had, they discovered that his mortgage was up for renewal and there was no way, even if they paid, that anyone would renew it.

"We basically have as long as it takes from when the Sheriff puts the note on his door to when they

change

the locks to empty his house," she says.

A majority of Steve's possessions will be put in storage.

Shannon believes that the only therapy Steve was getting at the hospital was drug therapy.

"He's got no real care, only drugs," she says. "None of us has ever even spoken to a doctor. We asked repeatedly for the doctor to phone us but he never did."

The plan was to find Steve a one-bedroom apartment and take over his finances. Shannon and Phil believe he may qualify for disability benefits, which would raise his income slightly. It could take up to nine months to find out if he qualifies.

Shannon and Phil live in Essex. They don't have the room or the resources to take Steve into their home. They are already taking care of Phil's mother. Shannon worries about moving him from Windsor to the county.

"He has no vehicle. He will become more isolated and more depressed," she says.

They had a difficult time finding any services or resources that might help Steve. When they did find something, they were unable to act on his behalf because he had not given anyone power of attorney for personal care or property.

Shannon says they repeatedly asked staff at the hospital and other organizations for help and direction. At first they got very little help and were given conflicting information from hospital staff and social workers.

"There's no consistency, no knowledge," she says. "We have all of these services and no one can find them. Why?"

When the hospital announced they were going to release Steve, his brother and sister-in-law panicked.

"They're talking about letting him out," she said at the time. "He cannot handle it. If he is let out on Friday, his chances of survival are slim. He will not see March 1."

At the last moment, when they were on the verge of losing all hope, a member of the hospital staff had a thought. She remembered a seminar she had attended that was hosted by a retirement home in the county and thought maybe they could help. She contacted them on behalf of the family.

The home offers retirement and assisted living. The staff at the facility took over Steve's case. The people there knew how to make the system work.

Steve now has a roof over his head at the retirement home. He was even allowed to bring his cat.

"It's not the Ritz Carleton, but it's not a box behind the grocery store either," sighs Shannon with relief.

There are still months of work ahead for Shannon and Phil. They were given some extra time to empty Steve's house and they are still advocating for him in financial matters.

Right now Steve is living in a unit with a few other men because that's all his benefits will cover. If he eventually qualifies for disability, he could end up with his own apartment within the complex.

"We didn't know they were there because nobody would help us," says Shannon. "There are lots of services out there that no one knows about because there is no communication within the system. Social workers who should know all of the services available, they don't know. They're uninformed or don't care."

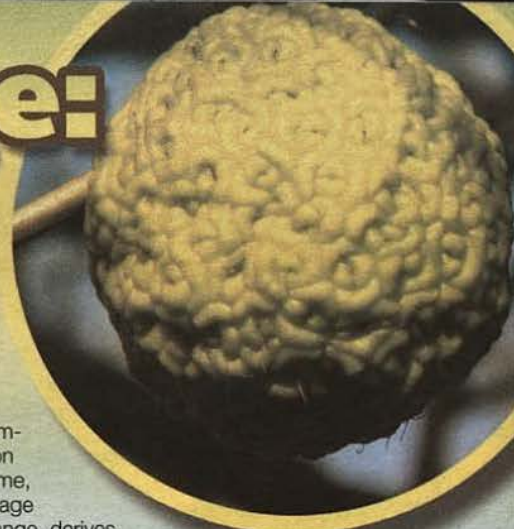
Homelessness is not just a city problem. It is not something that only the mentally ill or the irresponsible have to face. Right here in "small town" Essex County there are regular people struggling to keep shelter overhead.

At the age of 17 Cameron says it best.

"There is no smooth transition going from having everything you want, having a house and food and clothes, to having nothing."

The Osage Orange: Looks can be deceiving

By Art Rhyno



There's something along Highway 3, between Maidstone and Oldcastle, that might perplex the casual traveller.

A single tree bearing greenish-yellow orbs stands sentry over a residential property on the north-east side of the road. But for the fruit-like spheres that appear most noticeably in the fall after the tree sheds its leaves, passersby might not give the tree a second glance. Once they catch your eye, however, these northern grapefruits beg for a closer inspection. The Osage orange is unlike anything you've ever seen in Essex County. It weighs heavy in your hand and feels more like a large bumpy softball than anything that might be found in a supermarket. Its citrusy aroma is deceptively alluring but, unlike the fruit from Florida, the Osage orange is definitely not suitable for human consumption. Although it's not considered poisonous to humans, only the most patient of squirrels would attempt to get through its hard exterior and thick, sticky sap to get at its seeds.

"The tree was brought from Texas," says John Arsenault, the owner of the property. "I am constantly gathering the fruit and piling it somewhere. It causes problems for my lawn tractor."

Curious passersby have stopped many times over the years because of the fruit's unusual appearance.

"There's nothing else like it," says Arsenault as he points out the sizeable thorns on the branches of the tree. "It attracts attention."

Although this species is a distant relative of the mulberry family, it is actually the only one of its kind in the world, says Dan Bissonnette, program coordinator for the Naturalized Habitat Network.

"The scientific name of the species is *Maclura pomifera*," says Bissonnette. "But its

common name, Osage orange, derives from the indigenous Osage Nation that historically occupied much of the lands in which this tree is found."

The Osage orange tree grows naturally in Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas but has been planted throughout the United States and in Canada. The wood of the tree is highly prized for its density and its resistance to rot. Early pioneers used it for tool handles and fence posts because of its durability.

"Early French explorers called it 'bois-d'arc', meaning 'wood of the bow', in reference to the aboriginal use of this species as a bow," says Bissonnette.

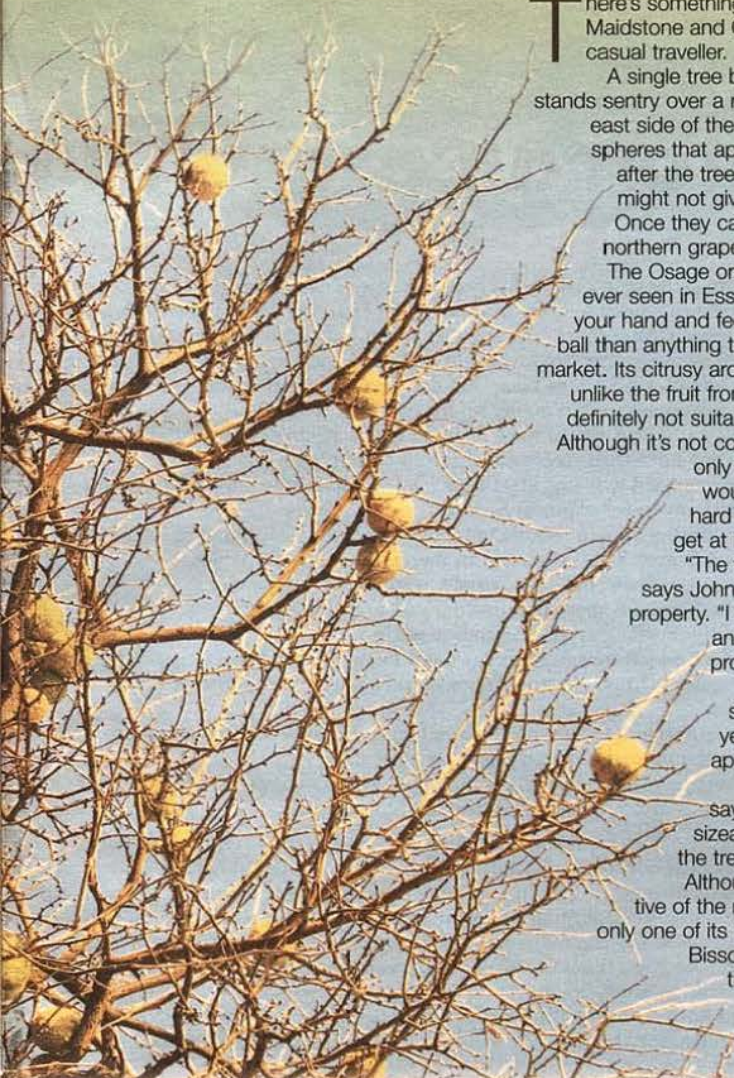
But the thorns account for at least one nickname – "hedge apple". Before the availability of barbed wire, the trees were planted in tight, hedge-like rows to deter livestock from wandering into gardens.

"It has also been used for wind breaks and shelter belts and reclamation projects," says Bissonnette.

While a decorative bowl of Osage oranges is definitely a conversation starter, you'd be best to leave it at that. It's tempting to cut open the fruit to see what's inside, but be warned – the sap that bleeds out is incredibly hard to remove from any instrument used for the incision. Your hands might need an aggressive scrubbing as well.

There is some speculation that the fruit can be used to ward off insects like spiders and cockroaches, although research suggests that it is a chemical compound within the fruit rather than the fruit itself that acts as the deterrent. Only the female tree produces fruit, and it can take ten years before gender can be determined, so going to the trouble of removing and planting the seeds of the fruit will not guarantee more fruit in the future.

The Osage orange is considered to be an adaptable and resilient tree. It also appears to have found a home in Essex County.



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It takes a village... and courage and strength and tenacity and humour and patience and... to raise a child

By Jennifer Cranston

The work, the adventure, the requirements, the rewards and the challenges that come with being a successful foster parent may surprise you. **Spotlight** spoke to foster parents, former foster parents and those in the process of becoming foster parents. A foster parent recruiter and a former foster child have also helped to give us an understanding of the truly exceptional people who open their homes and their hearts to children in need.

Due to the candid information, commentary and opinions presented in this story, most of the participants agreed to share their stories only with the protection of anonymity. It is also a legal obligation to protect the identity and location of foster children. Many of the names have been changed. The people we spoke to live in Essex County and do or did have a relationship with Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society (CAS).

Unfortunately, there are times when, for various reasons, a child cannot live with their natural parents. Fortunately there are amazing individuals, couples and families who will take these children into their homes, their lives and their hearts. A child can be in foster care for as little as a few hours, a few weeks, months or years, or for their entire childhood. Foster parents do the best they can, in whatever amount of time they have, to repair emotional damage and point these kids in the right direction.

Introductions

JANICE AND PAUL have been fostering children with special needs for about 13 years.

"My child has special needs, so I had to stay home," explains Janice. "That gave me the opportunity to foster other children and, because we have experience, I chose kids with special needs."

They have two adult children, a teenaged daughter and three foster kids. Two of the foster kids are old enough to have aged out of the system – they're over 18 – but because their disabilities don't allow them to live independently, Janice and Paul keep these young people with them, in the only home they've known for the last several years.

In 13 years, Janice and Paul have fostered close to 30 children with intellectual, emotional and physical disabilities. Some of the children brought to them had illnesses so severe that they were not expected to live into adulthood.

SARAH and her family fostered several children over 15 years.

"We took teenagers," she says. "The longest (stay) was about one and a half years. The shortest was about eight minutes."

They chose to stop fostering in 2008.

"It was hard to give up," she says.

LISA is a happily married mother of three. When she was 13 her biological

mother died, leaving Lisa in the care of Marie. There was no inheritance or life insurance money to draw from, so when Lisa was 15 and needed braces Marie asked CAS if there was any way to get help with covering the cost.

"The only way any funding could be issued was to make me a ward of the crown through CAS," says Lisa. "My dad signed papers ensuring that Marie remain my guardian, but giving up his parental rights."

SUSAN AND PHIL SMITH have fostered about 30 children over the last nine years. They have three teenaged children of their own.

"My youngest was just starting school so I had time, but still wanted to be home with my kids," explains Susan.

The Smiths take in infants to toddlers and will keep them as long as they need to stay. They also care for many special needs babies.

Susan is a foster parent advocate, a support group leader for FASD (fetal alcohol spectrum disorder), and on the executive board of the Foster Parent Association of CAS.

"Before we got married, my husband knew that children are my passion," says Susan. "There would always be children in our home."

RENEE AND HER HUSBAND TIM have two children of their own and are currently in the process of becoming foster parents.

"I can't have any more children and we always wanted three children," says Renee. "You can foster with the intent to adopt."

The kids, the challenges and rewards

Compared to most families, foster families face unique challenges. They also experience moving rewards. Foster parents have a passion and a love for children that gives them the strength to overcome the harder parts and makes the rewards so much greater.

"You have to start with a love for children," Susan says. "These are the most challenging children you will ever parent. But, because the challenges are greater, so are the rewards."

Susan's favourite experience as a foster parent is when she gets to see her kids go to a happy home.

"Sometimes we're able to stay in touch with the children," she says. "It's awesome when it can happen."

Some of her children have grown up in other homes but still call her and Phil "Mom and Dad Smith."

"Those connections last a lifetime," she says.

It's not all happy endings when you're talking about kids who have had a rough start in life.

"The hardest thing is when a child isn't successful. As hard as we plan, there are children who are not successful," she says. "We take comfort in that we've made the difference we can and they are in God's hands."

Sarah found that life with foster children was often exciting and never boring.

"My favourite part was seeing these kids figure out what they want," she says.

A few of these kids still contact her, her husband and her kids.

With older children often come bigger problems.

"You teach your own kids to be loving, open and giving and then you tell them to hide all of their favourite stuff," says Sarah.

Sarah believes that her own kids took a lot of the brunt of the negative aspects of raising foster children.

"My son was 11 when he stopped a potential suicide," she says. "He once took a heck of a punch defending his younger brother too."

Even with some of the more trying times, she believes the overall effect on her family has been a positive one.

"I think my kids are better people for it. My husband and I are better people for it," she says. "My kids turned out pretty fabulous."

Many of her foster children went on to have successful lives, but not all of them.

"I always check names in the paper looking for my kids," she says.

Some of the more challenging kids have come back to Sarah and her husband and thanked them and even introduced them to their own children. Sarah explains that most kids are not happy to be in foster care. Only about 10 per cent of her kids were happy to be out of their parent's home.

Sarah explains that there are a few kids who look at where they came from and say, "I'm going to be better than that." She spoke of one young man she knows who, when given the opportunity to go home, said no.

He wanted an education. He was willing to live in a group home for about five years just for the opportunity to go to school. His biological family did not consider education to be important and he knew if he went back he would not be able to continue with school.

Most of the foster parents we spoke to warned that foster parenting changes your relationships with your family and friends and not always for the better.

"Just because you're passionate about it doesn't mean you friends and family will be," says Sarah. "You can lose friends over it. You can offend your family."

The foster parents we spoke to also agreed that, despite of the challenges, the rewards make it worthwhile.

"We don't regret being foster parents at all," says Sarah.

Janice and Paul take in sick and disabled children. That brings with it challenges and rewards of its own.

"It's the satisfaction of giving kids a home, food, love and acceptance of who they are," says Janice.

In order to be an effective foster parent, you must love the children that come into your home. That love makes it harder to see them go.

"We had one little girl we just fell in love with. She went back to her parents and it hurt my soul," says Paul.

Some of the children that come into Paul and Janice's home are not expected to live very long. Friends and family have asked them why they would put themselves through that kind of hurt.

"How can you let a child pass without a family to love them?" Janice asks.

There is one child who has lived well past what doctors predicted.

"Without love (the child) wouldn't be here. I know I've helped," says Paul.

One foster child died of a terminal condition while in their care. Janice and Paul knew before they agreed to take her that the child had very little time. Paul spoke to his nine-year-old son and asked him if it would be too hard to fall in love only to have to say goodbye.

"He says, 'Well, we can give her lots of love while she's here,' and I knew that I was doing something right – making a difference in the world," he says.

The agency – requirements, supports and getting along

Foster parents work through CAS. The agency is there to train, lend support and guidance, and ensure that foster parents are meeting the high expectations that come with caring for other people's children.

There is a lot of education that takes place before someone becomes a foster parent. That education continues while you foster.

Renee and Tim are in the process of becoming foster parents. They will have to take a nine-week course before they take in any children and they will have to attend regular classes and meetings while they foster.

There is also 24-hour access to support networks through the agency.

"Every new foster parent has a residential worker (that visits regularly) for the first year," says Susan.

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services requires certain things of foster families and foster homes that other people don't

have to worry about. All medications must be locked up at all times and, if you have a pool, it must have an alarm on it. There are certain types of dogs you cannot have. You must have insurance on your home and vehicles and you must have a valid driver's license. Any babysitters must be approved by the agency and smoking is strictly governed. These are just a few of the requirements, most of which are designed to ensure the safety of the children.

Darcy Thachuk is a foster parent recruiter and trainer with CAS. She says foster parents should be flexible, have a sense of humour and possess good communication skills. She also says a foster home needs to be one that can be run with structure. For example, if your job has you traveling a lot or working odd hours, it may not be for you.

"There are times when the agency and the foster families don't get along, but that happens in any job," says Susan.

CAS provides money to care for and support these children, but it isn't large amounts of money.

"If you're in it for the money, you're not going to have a very rewarding career," says Paul.

Thachuk says one of the requirements is that a foster home be financially stable. There will be out-of-pocket expenses. Children can be destructive at the best of times and the damage done to homes and property is not always covered by the agency. Sarah and Janice both spoke of damage they've had to pay for out-of-pocket.

For Sarah, the agency was a large part of why she gave up fostering.

"The disagreements with the agency were the worst part," she says. "I think they have a tough job, but I think that theory and reality are two different things."

Sarah believes that their motivation is "right on the money," but that their expectations can be unrealistic. She says that an important part of the services provided to these children is the ability to talk about what they like and don't like and about how they're doing in their foster homes. The catch there is that kids learn how to work that system pretty quickly. Sometimes they lie or complain about silly things. Every time a child complains, there needs to be an investigation. It can get to be very counter-productive for all the people involved, especially the child.

Sarah had one child who, she had been warned, was hostile. Eventually he became angry and accused Sarah and her husband of hitting him. Sarah understood that there would need to be an investigation, even though the agency knew her kids were never hit. The investigation took months.

"We did nothing wrong, but they left us hanging for four months," she says.

Sarah says that many of the policies that are handed down don't work in the real world.

"You have to realize, they're hands are tied," she says. "Some of the policies and decisions don't make a lot of sense but they are law."

Sarah is not the only one who has discovered an occasional disconnect between the agency and reality.

"I've always said that every person at CAS should have to spend a month with a foster kid," says Sarah.

Lisa, who spent much of her childhood in foster care, takes it a step further.

"I understand that education is incredibly important, but it's not enough," she says. "Anyone without children should not be allowed to make decisions on parenting."

Janice says that, as a foster parent, there have been times when she has felt taken advantage of. Some of her kids have needed special structural requirements in the home, like ramps and lifts. She says that sometimes she feels like she has to fight to get help with these things and has often paid out-of-pocket for them. She even bought a special vehicle for a child who was removed after only a few months.

The goals and the policies

Thachuk says the need for foster parents is always there. They try very hard to match children with foster homes that "fit" them well, so it is important to have various homes to choose from. It is also a priority to get these children into a situation that is permanent, be it a foster home, the parent's home, relatives or adoption.

"The agency is all about permanency," she says.

Foster parents come from all walks of life. They can be single or married,

a young family with children or a retired couple. In an area as ethnically diverse as Windsor-Essex, it is also important to have people of many different backgrounds.

"They all have a common theme – a passion for children," says Thachuk. Thachuk is proud of the fact that Windsor-Essex has the lowest number of children in foster care in Ontario. It has a lot to do with the hard work the agency puts into getting kids settled into permanent homes.

At the end of 2009 there were 678 children in foster care through CAS. Permanency planning includes exploring all options. The best case involves getting the parents to a point where they can competently take care of their own children.

"The main goal of foster care is to return children back home," says Thachuk. "To strengthen families to make it safe for kids to go home."

When that isn't an option, CAS looks to relatives next, or what they call "kinship" placement. Some kids stay in foster care until they are adults and many are adopted.

In 2009, 26 children were adopted through CAS. There are some that are still pending and many that still need adoptive homes. At the beginning of 2010 there were 26 children from infancy to six years old, 39 children from seven to 13 and 39 children from 14 to 17 who were in need of adoptive homes.

Often foster parents adopt, but you don't have to be a foster parent to adopt through CAS.

Thinking about it

If foster parenting is something that you have been considering, it is important to go in with a good understanding of what will be required.

Many people think it would be too hard to fall in love with children only to see them leave.

"It's not for everybody," says Susan. "But don't count yourself out just because it's hard to give them back. If it's not hard to give them back, you're not doing it right."

Those who wish to foster children should be in good health and financially stable, Thachuk says.

Foster parenting is a constant learning environment with lots of support

through the agency and support groups.

Renee spoke about the process she is currently undergoing.

"First they come and evaluate your home," she says.

Foster kids don't have to have their own bedroom, but they do have to have their own bed and their own storage. The agency also looks for safety factors. Carbon monoxide and smoke detectors must be in place and there must be a way to lock up medication.

"There are mounds and mounds of paperwork," says Renee.

You will be asked about your own childhood, your kids, your parents and your spouse. They want to know what your parenting style is like. They will also want to know what your parents' parenting style was like.

Who do you talk to when you have problems? What do you do with your friends?

"Many of the questions are the same, just asked in different ways," says Renee. "It will get extremely personal."

Renee says there were two forms that took two days each to fill out.

"Just because you want to be a foster parent doesn't mean you'll get to be a foster parent," says Renee. "They make sure that you're emotionally healthy enough to deal with what comes up with abused children. Some people might be just too naïve."

Much of the questioning is also to help the agency place the right children in the right homes.

Renee and Tim are requesting children under five, because it is recommended that foster children be younger than biological children.

Susan explained that this policy helps biological children to "maintain their place" in the family structure.

If you are unsure if fostering is right for you, but you still want to help there are ways to go about it.

CAS needs volunteers to take children to and from parent visitations. There are also mentoring programs and homework programs that you can become involved in.

"A good way to get started and find out if it's right for you is to become a "relief home," explains Thachuk.

Foster parents are amazing people who give of themselves every day. They are always needed. There are never too many. The challenges may seem staggering but the rewards are great and deeply felt.



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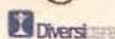
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INVENTORS

Contemporary explorers pushing the boundaries

By Kevin Wickham

Guglielmo Marconi was one. So was Alexander Graham Bell. For Marconi, it was the promise of using radio waves to create a new era of communication. For Bell, it was the possibilities of sound technology to improve lives. Dedicated to the point of obsession, these inventors journeyed to the fringes of what seemed possible with intense dedication.

"They all have to be tenacious and single-minded and dedicated, and that usually translates into somebody that is a little bit crazy," observes Lisa Gabriele, a journalist and Belle River high graduate who is also a senior producer of the CBC television show "Dragon's Den". The popular show features entrepreneurs who pitch their products to five business experts – the Dragons – in the hopes of securing venture capital.

"Watching people try to convince somebody that they have a great idea is what makes great television. It becomes very watchable. Tenacity and single-mindedness are not necessarily great character traits for the average

person but most inventors aren't average. They are quite extraordinary," explains Gabriele, who has been with the show for four years.

With Dragon's Den's auditions scheduled for early March at the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce, it seemed like a perfect time to sit down with four inventors from Essex County and find out more about their journeys.



^
The Strong
SUAD Device

To protect his identity and his invention, which has yet to be patented, we'll call our first inventor 'Double D' or DD. He's a 26-year-old Windsorite who has spent \$300 in the last seven months on his prototype.

"It's kind of at a stagnant point right now," says DD.

"Once I made the idea and got the prototypes together, I wasn't in a position to invest anything myself except the idea and the concept. I didn't have the money to be tossing out for mass production. I can't say that I would even see it being finished."

The invention is very straightforward. It addresses mobility and grip issues in the field of artistic expression. The elderly and people with disabilities, including children, could benefit from it.

A philosopher at heart, DD's ideas came from seeing a problem and looking for a solution. He currently works at a long-term care facility in the Rose City as a chef. An avid reader, DD's father is a teacher and his mother runs a marketing company. She also served as a sounding board for his ideas.

DD's agenda is societal improvement. He wants his invention to have wide-reaching appeal for the health care industry and schools with special needs students.

"When you have a feeling about something, nine times out of ten you're right," he says.

All the ideas for the invention came from "seniors with children" and a desire to bridge the gap between the ages.

"People feel comfortable around kids and kids always love being around grandparents," DD says.

With patent application fees topping out at \$5,000, DD has been told by legal professionals that his idea has merit but needs investment to proceed.

"Marketing it to the public is something I haven't even thought about yet," he says. "But if I had backing to do it, I would hit up the health care sector across the board."

Despite his creative flair, DD says real life creates constraints, even for those trying to offer something new and useful. He compares an inventor to a chef.

"When I take a raw product from a state that was inedible and I manipulate it into something that is producible, I guess it's an ability to see the merit in something before others can."

< Ozone Nation owner Michael Antinozzi and his son Patrick



Patrick Strong is the president of Strong Dental, a Leamington-based sleep apnea and dental treatment clinic. When the graduate of Toronto's George Brown College was 16, his uncle, owner of the Strong Dental lab in Windsor, took him under his wing. Patrick's father had passed away and the teenager was looking for support and direction. He worked for his uncle that summer and discovered he liked the work.

In 1997, Patrick and his wife started a business that now has 20 employees. He won the Leamington Entrepreneur of the Year award in 2003 in his sixth year of business.

Patrick's best known invention is the Strong Upper Airway Dilating or SUAD device. It was approved by the USFDA in 2002 and is classified as a dental appliance in Canada and a class two medical device in the U.S.

The SUAD device is used in the treatment of sleep apnea, a condition Patrick knows well because he is a patient in his own practice. Sleep-deprived patients may stop breathing 5 to 15 times an hour (mild), 15 to 35 times (moderate), or more than 35 times an hour (severe). Patrick is in the 56 times an hour range. Over time, the condition stresses the heart and increases the chance of high blood pressure, heart attack and stroke.

"Every time you stop breathing, your airway collapses at the back of your throat and you stop bringing in oxygen," Strong explains. "Your oxygen level is going to drop down so low that it's incompatible with life. You are not going to stay there because, if you do, you're going to die. So, the brain panics. Panicking is adrenaline; adrenaline is blood pressure and the pulse going up. You take a breath, you start to normalize again. If you're a severe apneic patient, by the time you take that second breath you've barely recovered. You are staying with high blood pressure all night long."

When worn, the SUAD device moves your lower jaw forward, allowing relaxation of the tissues at the back of your throat and ensuring the base of your tongue does not collapse and block your airway. The device is an effective treatment for snoring and sleep apnea.

In the last four years, Strong Dental has had five expansions. Their clientele is ninety-eight per cent American and, in the last six years, the clinic has treated well over two thousand patients. The product manufacturing, all done onsite, has sustained a thirty-three per cent growth in sales and fabrication for the last five years.

The SUAD device costs \$1300, and is the only appliance worldwide, according to Patrick, that will "stand up to the rigors of grinding teeth and abuse because it has an inner casted framework." He holds the two patents and carries out his inventive research in Atlanta, Georgia because "there are lots of spies here."

Michael Antinozzi, a 44-year-old Montreal native, worked in the high-tech industry for 20 years as a computer programmer and manager of business practices. His career took him to Ottawa, then Dallas for four years. Following a transfer to Detroit, he lived in Windsor and Kingsville.

Michael's invention came about in his Windsor garage. Six months before he left Sun Micro Systems, Michael's brother-in-law consulted him about purchasing a large commercial washing machine to use as part of cleaning system for athletic gear. Michael realized that using a traditional washing machine wasn't the right choice. He was aware that a competitor had built a machine that used ozone as a cleaning agent.

After much research, and testing substances that eliminate smell, Michael decided that ozone was the disinfectant of choice. It is a safe element composed of an additional oxygen atom - three parts oxygen. Ozone is the second most powerful antioxidant or disinfectant known to exist. Only fluorine gas is more powerful, but it is a lethal substance that can result in death.

Michael started Ozone Nation Inc., and incorporated the business in

2005. Located on County Road 42, across from Windsor Airport, Ozone Nation features a 500-lb. cleaning machine for hockey equipment called The Fresh Gear C40. It is trademarked and in the patent pending stage.

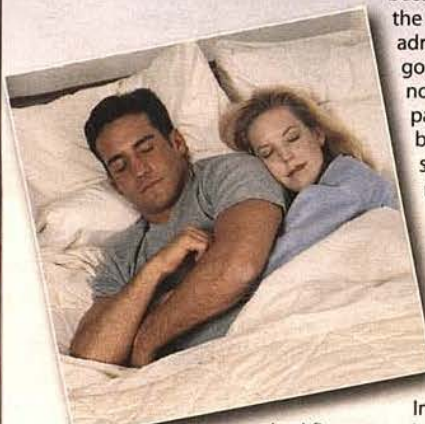
Within the C40, ozone is produced through high voltage electricity. It splits regular oxygen molecules into two atoms. A generator takes the regular air inside the cabinet, passes it through an electrical charge, which creates ozone, then blows it at the right velocity and volume up into the fabric where it attacks bacteria and it turns back into oxygen. No ventilation, no pipes, no tanks.

Michael chose hockey equipment because it was the most applicable to Canadian sport. The C40 costs \$13,950, with a three-year warranty on everything. Three Canadian Hockey League teams have purchased the machine, as well as the NHL's Washington Capitals, Columbus Bluejackets and Dallas Stars. One hundred machines have been sold in Canada.

With customer services in the front and the machine's manufacturing component in the rear, Ozone Nation is a family affair. Michael's son Patrick runs the day-to-day operations when dad is away, while his youngest son James works part-time. Daughter Christina works the phones and customer service responsibilities.

"One of my ex-co-workers from Sun used to say, 'You're a systems analyst, you're not an inventor, and I kind of laughed,' Michael reflects. 'I thought, what's the job description of an inventor? Somebody gets an idea, you test it and see whether it works. It probably doesn't work phenomenally right away but you get a glimmer and you think, what if I did this instead, and what if I did this, and you actually start down a path.'"

The Fresh Gear C40 not only cleans athletic gear but also works on firefighting equipment, police vests, fur coats, rubber boots, horse blankets and saddles.




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Tecumseh's Russ Bennett, a 2002 retiree from the Quality department at Ford, drives around with invention number one emblazoned on his license plate – TRUPUTT1.

As a student of the game of golf, with a handicap of eight, Russ has played the sport since he was 18 years old. After one year of living the good life, Russ started to invent Bennett Tru-Putt – "the ultimate putting trainer" – in his garage. Looking through his collection of Golf Digest magazines, Russ noticed a trend in the articles – the putting tips concentrated on proper aim and speed, stance, eye over the ball. He embarked on developing a putting trainer to improve the skill that separates winning from losing.

"Putting is a game within a game," Russ points out. "In putting, in the game of golf, we're all equal. Tiger (Woods), I don't care how good of shape he's in, it doesn't mean he has any more ability than a 10-year-old kid or an 80-year-old woman. The physical aspect doesn't come into the picture. It comes down to feel, training and alignment."

After many alterations, Russ developed two models of the putting trainer. Model 1, an L-shaped design patented in the U.S., U.K. and Canada, is made of wires, beads, and a flat pedestal. It guarantees you are standing directly over the ball and square to your putt line. The wires and beads, through adjustments, allow you to "dial into the putt." Model 2 weighs only six ounces, with a spike that affixes the product to the ground.

With Russ's investment so far totaling \$250,000, Tru-Putt claims to improve your putting up to a range of 35 feet. With 62-million golfers in the world – 38 million of them in North America – Russ is able to say, "All I want is one per cent of the market." At \$10 profit per unit, that's a mere \$6 million.

Russ sells the product from his website (www.bennetttruputt.com) fully packaged with a 55-minute DVD for \$69.95. It takes 30 seconds to set up and can be used repeatedly. Russ has sold 600 units so far.

Overall, Russ estimates he spent \$100,000 getting started. Brochures, marketing, and his website were all necessary before he could sell one unit.

In 2008, Bennett auditioned for

the Dragon's Den in Kitchener, but he didn't make the final cut for television. The Dragons said he was on the market too long, had spent too much money and had not sold enough units.

"They told us up front that not all the best products get on the show. Sometimes it's what makes good television," Russ remembers. The Dragons thought Model 1 was too heavy, about four pounds, and it wasn't portable.

"He had an interesting product, and it was a fine invention but because it was very difficult to explain, it didn't translate into good television," Gabriele notes.

Because of his financial investment, most of it from his retirement fund, Russ has had many second thoughts on being an inventor.

"Some days I wish I'd never thought of it. I'd be much better off financially and be more relaxed," he says.

All of our local inventors have experienced the maze of paperwork and bureaucracy that comes with creativity. Lisa Gabriele has met hundreds of would-be millionaires and has some tips for future inventors. Have a working prototype, be realistic about your evaluation, and know your numbers.

"You may think you have a million dollar idea but if you've sold two thousand, then you have a \$10,000 idea," she says.

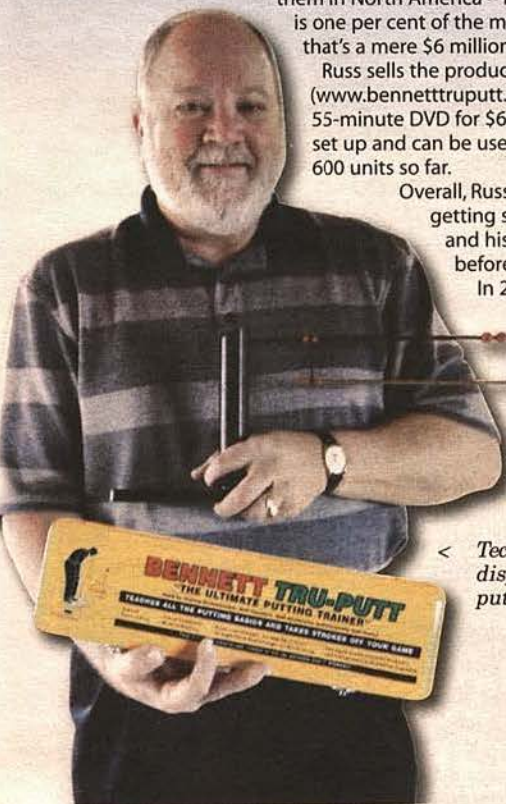
"Sweat equity is par for the course, so is passion. You have to have that, but you are not going to get paid for it, yet, until that thing starts to generate income and it's not going to do that until you get your investment, so be realistic about that."

DD's advice is, do your research.

"I spent two months trying to fill out something and you get a letter back saying this is already in progress," he says.

Patrick Strong advises would-be inventors not to use a bank or go into debt to invest in the invention. He also recommends that you patent your product in the U.S. first because the market is so much larger than Canada's.

Russ Bennett advises inventors to keep quiet! Develop your idea to the point where you are ready to file for patent pending and get a quote from a lawyer on what it's going to cost.



< Tecumseh's Russ Bennett displays his Tru-putt putting trainer.

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ahead of the herd

Woodslee sheep farm serves niche market

By Jennifer Cranston

Carolyn Fuerth and her husband Rick aren't simply following the herd. They own and operate one of only a few sheep farms in Essex County.

Ewe Dell Family Farms in Woodslee has been serving an ethnic niche market successfully since the Fuerths brought home their first herd in 1973.

Carolyn grew up on a summer resort in Haliburton and studied human nutrition at university. Rick grew up on a dairy farm and studied animal sciences. While most students return home with dirty laundry and debt, the Fuerths came home saddled with other responsibilities.

"We brought some sheep home from university," says Carolyn.

They've never looked back.

"We put an ad in the paper at Easter the first year and never had to advertise again," she says.

The Fuerths designed and built all the buildings for the sheep operation, including their own abattoir.

"Part of the advantage of having our own abattoir is that control of end use helps with profitability," says Carolyn.

The abattoir operates every Friday and three times a week before religious feast days when demand is higher. A provincial inspector is always on site when killing is done.

Because they serve ethnic and religious groups, there are often special requirements for how the lambs are processed.

"Our customer base is not WASP (White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant)," explains Carolyn.

About 30 per cent of their customers are Muslim. People of Greek, Serbian, Croatian, African and Lebanese descent make up most of the remaining 70 per cent. Producing Kosher meat is cost-prohibitive; Jewish people are better served out of larger markets in Michigan, Carolyn says.

Winter is a busy time for the sheep at Ewe Dell. It is lambing season and it's also the time for shearing.

A "city kid" might expect shearing to be terrifying and traumatic for sheep. After all, they are shy and timid beasts, aren't they?

Carolyn laughs. She doesn't know if it scares them, she's never asked them.

Upon walking into the barn where the shearers are hard at work, one discovers it's not much different than getting a haircut and the sheep don't seem to mind at all.

A "city kid" might also think that it makes more sense to shear in the summer. Don't they need their fleece to stay warm in the winter?

Fleece in the summer protects the sheep from the sun. If it's left on in

^ Ewes and their lambs are kept separate from the rest of the herd.

the winter it can cause other problems. Because it's lambing season, it is important that the utters are exposed and easy for the lambs to find. Fleece also holds moisture. In a wintery barn, moisture can contribute to illness like pneumonia.

The Fuerths raise meat sheep, so sale of the fleece does not cover the cost of shearing but it needs to be done. Ewe Dell produces low quality fleece, meaning it's made into blankets rather than suits.

Jeff Russell and his dad Calvin are part of a three-generation traveling shearing business. Calvin's father is still working, but he didn't make the trip to Ewe Dell this year.

The Russells worked all day shearing all the sheep Ewe Dell had to offer. They stopped only for a mid-day meal provided by the Fuerths.

There is no need to "wrestle" with the beasts. Jeff explains that maneuvering and handling the sheep is more about using pressure points rather than force.

Like the Russells, the Fuerths also operate a family business. Carolyn and Rick's eldest son Jason does most of the work with the sheep and joins Rick on Saturdays to help with the cutting.

"I do more of the marketing and that sort of stuff," explains Carolyn.

Like many farmers, agriculture is not the Fuerths' only business. They also own a construction business. Their youngest son Shawn works in that part of the family enterprise.

Daughter Tricia works out west building bridges but comes home to help out when she's needed. Her experience on the family farm has made her into a reluctant vegetarian of sorts.

"I don't believe in factory farming," Tricia says. "I won't eat meat if I don't know where it came from."

She will eat the meat if she knows its origin, including what her family produces.

The Fuerth farm is the largest sheep farm in the region. It houses about 500 to 600 ewes and about seven rams. It markets about 4,500 sheep and lambs from the farm gate each year. It is also used as a model and learning tool for other agricultural professionals.

In September 2009, Rob Bradley of Longford, Tasmania, Australia spent time at Ewe Dell, visiting throughout the region with Carolyn as his guide. Bradley was traveling the globe courtesy of the Nuffield Scholarship Program. Carolyn was a Canadian Nuffield Scholar in 1999.

That isn't the only opportunity that their chosen field has offered.



Once a year the Fuerths go to an agricultural leadership conference in the U.S. or Australia. While it makes for some great vacations, leadership is a big part of who they are. Carolyn, Rick and Jason are involved in countless agricultural organizations.

Rick is a founding member of the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency. Jason is involved in an agriculture research committee for the province. Carolyn is on the Ontario Farm Marketing Commission. They are also involved in the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Ontario Agri-Food Education Inc. and the Agriculture Research Institute of Ontario, to name a few.

Carolyn is also involved in various charity organizations.

Rick says he has no intention of retiring. This is his hobby as well as his job.

The farm gate market has various cuts available. Saturday morning is set aside for cutting and pick-up, but the Fuerths will gladly accommodate the customer's schedule. It is recommended that orders be called in, especially for large orders or a whole lamb.



Sheep shearer Calvin Russell lays out a single fleece, illustrating that when it's shorn properly it is in one piece.



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If you're old enough to count on Senior's Da
parents may have told
false floors in houses and
became hiding places for bootleggers they described perfectly curved
fit neatly into their boots – another way of ferrying contraband liquor across the border. Maybe they even shared tales of their youth, when they drove up cars filled with cases of beer across the frozen Detroit River.

If your family was here in the 1920s, the chances are good that the attic has stories to tell about bootlegging and prohibition.

In 1916, the province of Ontario passed the Ontario Temperance Act, a law that banned the sale of liquor and launched the era of prohibition. Other provinces followed suit. In 1920, the U.S. Congress

SPOTLIGHT ON ESSEX COUNTY

By Jennifer Cranston

If you're old enough to get a discount on Senior's Day, your grandparents may have told stories about false floors in houses and barns that became hiding places for booze. Or perhaps they described perfectly curved bottles that fit neatly into their boots – an unobtrusive way of ferrying contraband liquor across the border. Maybe they even shared harrowing tales of their youth, when they drove old beat-up cars filled with cases of beer and whiskey across the frozen Detroit River.

In 1916, the province of Ontario passed the Ontario Temperance Act, a law that prohibited the sale of liquor and launched the era known as prohibition. Other provinces and

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SPOTLIGHT ON ESSEX

According to some experts, prohibition was the best thing that ever happened to our local economy. It is estimated that about 80 per cent of the alcohol consumed in the U.S. during prohibition passed through Windsor and Essex County. When a provincial referendum on prohibition was held in 1919, the people of Windsor voted overwhelmingly in favour of the sale of beer and liquor packaged under government control. The province, however, voted to continue with and strengthen the Temperance Act and prohibit the sale of all alcoholic beverages.

Fortunately there are a handful of historians, writers and collectors who are still doing what they can to preserve the memories of one of the most exciting and profitable periods in Essex County history. The best news is that many of them began collecting and recording all the information they could get their hands on before those firsthand accounts were lost.

How to say "No!"
Mark Your Ballot with an X after Each Question under the word "No"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

Below is an exact reproduction of the Referendum ballot, showing the correct way to Vote in order to sustain the Ontario Temperance Act as it stands.

Every voter should study the four questions and the reasons why when they receive the ballot. Do not be misled by the excessive demands for "higher taxes".

The law of the ballot is 118" stronger than the Ontario Temperance Act now before the Ontario Legislature. The law of the ballot is 118" stronger than the law of the Ontario Temperance Act now before the Ontario Legislature.

Answer Each Question

Mark your vote on every question your ballot contains. Mark your answer to each question. Mark your answer to each question. Mark your answer to each question.

The Citizens' Liberty League is an organization of
 sensitive men and women throughout Ontario, who
 legislation (Dominion or Provincial) which tends to opp
 the liberties and lawful rights of the citizen.
 In view of the imminence of the Ontario Referendum
 activities of the League will for the present be chie
 directed to

CITIZENS' LIBERTY LEAGUE

Its Aim and Its Object

SANE LIQUOR LEGISLATION

The Ontario Temperance Act, adopted by the Governme
 as a war measure—without the vote of the people—
 legislation that does curtail personal liberty and one whic
 has bred great dissatisfaction.

The Citizens' Liberty League is
 absolutely opposed to a return of the
 Ontario as it previously existed in
 The League believes that the Govern
 ment and so enable the Governme
 to enact a law in accord with
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 ting the general sale of non-intoxicant
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Now that a Referendum is about
 to be taken the members of the
 feel that every citizen should
 understand the meaning and
 scope of the question and
 Forenoon Ballot.

To accomplish this the Lib
 erty League has

[illegible]

Victoria Beaulieu of Lakeshore is an avid and active historian. She runs the Maidstone Bicentennial Museum on Puce Rd., the site of a new prohibition exhibit, and she and her husband, Romeo, own two historic buildings in Belle River at an intersection she affectionately calls "Rumrunner's Corner."

Beaulieu has spent years talking to the elders in her community, collecting stories about every part of our regional history. She has learned not only that Belle River was instrumental in the illegal trafficking of alcohol, but also that much of the town's development was due to the proceeds from black market booze.

The Stone Garden Bed and Breakfast was built by William LaVoie in 1920. It was his family home, but he ran a bootlegging operation out of the Log Inn, a restaurant and dance hall located next door to the house. Today the Beaulieus own both buildings. The Log Inn is now an apartment building.

Beaulieu has never been in the building that was LaVoie's first home. It is located across from Belle River District High School.

"Old-timers talk about that house having a false floor," she says.

Beaulieu has restored much of the bed and breakfast to its original state, uncovering hand-painted frescos and murals on many of the walls. The house bears the original lighting and boiler. A furnace and central air system has been installed as back up.

The apartment building still has the original tin ceilings and hardwood floors.

"If that building could talk, it would be one hell of a building to listen to," she laughs.

Beaulieu never met LaVoie himself but she did have the opportunity to visit with his granddaughter before she died. Renowned Canadian author June Callwood remembered her grandfather sitting in his wheelchair in front of a window in the house, a vantage point that allowed him to keep a close eye on his operations next door.

Not far from the Stone Garden Bed and Breakfast is a deteriorating duplex that was once the home of Blaise Diesbourg. He supplied the likes of Al Capone of Chicago and the Purple Gang of Detroit with regular shipments of liquor by plane. Diesbourg's underworld colleagues knew him as King Canada. The house is rumoured to contain hidden secret passages within it.

James Cooper was an extremely successful rumrunner from Belle River. He also worked in the sales department at Hiram Walker's Distilleries. The first mansion he built still stands and bears the same name. Cooper's Court is now a tavern in town. Cooper eventually built a larger, more opulent mansion in Walkerville, but he continued to leave his mark on Belle River.

Cooper opened the Belle River Grain and Seed Company, the Belle River Brick and Tile Company, Belle River Poultry Farms and green houses that still stand today. He used his considerable fortune to set up friends and neighbours in their own businesses. St. James High School was named for him

when he donat-

ed the entire cost of its construction. He also presented cash awards to students who excelled.

Cooper adopted three children, but his soft spot for kids did not stop there. He took orphans on field trips and made sure schoolchildren could get haircuts and visits to the dentist. He also supported local farmers with gifts of prize-winning cattle and Ford tractors, and is credited with bringing hydro-electrical lines into town.

Using his rum running knowledge, Cooper started the first agricultural import/export business that operated back and forth across the border.

Because he didn't focus solely on the liquor trade, the philanthropist was one of the few black market booze dealers of the day who was still financially well off when he died.

"I'm so intrigued by Cooper," says Beaulieu. "I have so much respect for Jim Cooper."

She says that even though the era was one of rampant criminal activity, good things were also happening and Cooper led the way.

"If Cooper hadn't put that money into Belle River, it would never have been what it is, or possibly even survived," she says.

Hiram Walker and Sons still stands on Riverside Drive in Windsor. Hiram Walker, his sons and grandsons are legends in their own right. Hiram Sr. was the founder of Walkerville. His lavish offices now hold a museum that exhibits hard evidence of the temperance movement, the prohibition era and the lucrative legacy of Canadian Club Whiskey. It is open for daily tours.

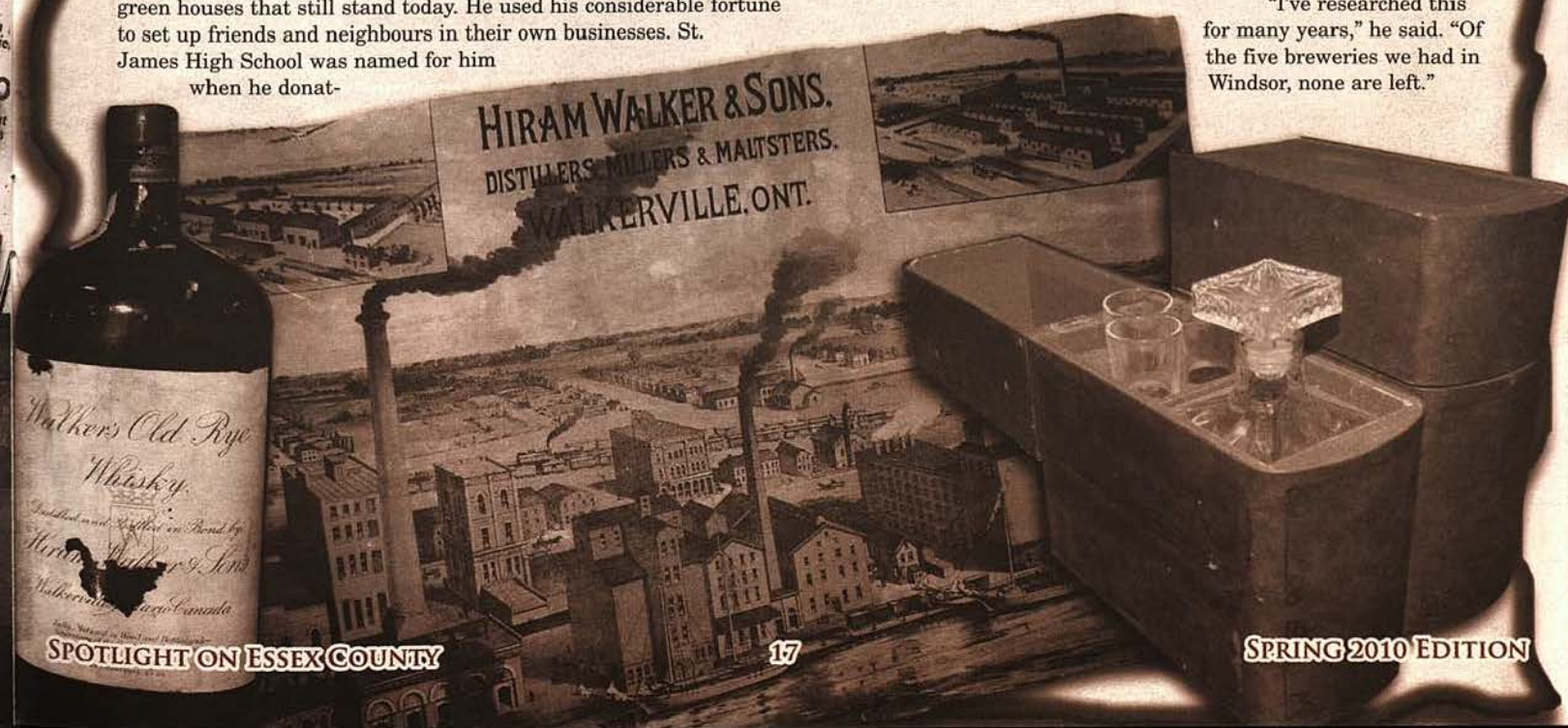
On a tour of the distillery, you will learn about a secretary whose ingenuity allowed her to make a fortune smuggling Canadian Whiskey under her clothes. You will also visit the place, originally a wine cellar, that became a secret meeting room in the 1920s for underworld legends like Al Capone, the Purple Gang and other American importers. As far as anyone knows, no one was ever killed in that room, but there is a bullet hole in the wall that speaks to the violence that was so prevalent across the border.

Anyone who studies the history of the area is bound to touch on rum running. This is the case for Bill Marentette whose fascination began with a childhood job at the original Walkerville Brewery and an interest in advertising.

"I have what you could call a museum in my basement," he laughs.

These interests have led Marentette to research all of the breweries in the area. He has collected bottles, promotional materials like serving trays, photographs, and countless other items that illustrate the prohibition era. He even has a bar that was created from the front counter of The Bermuda Export Co., a booze cartel that operated in Essex County.

"I've researched this for many years," he said. "Of the five breweries we had in Windsor, none are left."



He can tell you all about how the Tecumseh Brewery became Old Comrade, which eventually became Carling. He also knows about the closed Hofer Brewery that still stands in LaSalle. He can rattle off the owners of the Walkerville Brewery in sequence, including Raymond Radner who owned it when Bill worked there. (Radner is also the father of famous Saturday Night Live comedienne Gilda Radner.)

People like Bill who hang onto the stories, legends and artifacts of our past, even when it's done simply for their own enjoyment, are the foundation of what will become the history we pass to future generations.

No one knows that better than journalist and author Marty Gervais. He is responsible for the most comprehensive collection of photographs, facts and firsthand accounts of the prohibition era as it affected this region.

In 1980, after years of research, Gervais published *The Rumrunners: A Prohibition Scrapbook*. Using a vast collection of photographs, Gervais tells the history of bootlegging along the Canada-U.S. border. He explores the laws, the loopholes and how the people of Windsor and Essex County exploited them.

Gervais explains how Hiram Walker came to Canada to avoid the temperance movement in the U.S. and how that paid off. He also takes a look at the roadhouses, speakeasies and blind pigs and shares the personal stories, often told in their own words, of Blaise "King Canada" Diesbourg, James Cooper, and Milton "Whitey" Benoit who continued to bootleg well into his seventies.

After the release of the first edition in 1980, people with stories to tell began to come forward. Gervais ended up with more information than he first published. Almost 30 years after the release of the first book, Gervais published the 30th Anniversary Edition in 2009. It contains 60 per cent new material.

The Rumrunners is a bestseller in Southwestern Ontario. It sold over 3,000 copies in the first three weeks it was available.

"The funny thing is that no one had done it," Gervais says. "So now I'm considered the expert. I don't consider myself an expert. I'm just a writer with a passion for it."

Gervais marvels at how many of the men he spoke to in the 1970s never lost that "entrepreneurial spirit." Sometimes he would have to take a break during an interview to allow a former rumrunner to sell a bottle or two out of their kitchen. One man would let Gervais drive him around on errands, but wouldn't divulge any information from his youth until the author paid him off with a bottle of Canadian Club.

Gervais says, while some remnants of bootlegging still exist, the true legacy lies in the stories.

"The families of the rumrunners are still

around," he says. "It's Windsor and Essex County stories."

It wasn't just the few criminal masterminds who played a part; it was ordinary people. Weapons were rarely used and very few people died.

"It's something that everybody had a stake in," he explains.

There are more stories out there. It is likely that every family has as least one, probably several. Was your grandmother or great-grandmother part of the temperance movement? Was your great-grandfather a rumrunner? Does the family farm include a barn with hidden storage under the floor? There are homes in Essex County with passageways, tunnels, false floors and hiding places that have been covered and forgotten. When was your house built and by whom?

"Ask your elders," says Gervais. "There are stories in every family. The stories that are important are usually the ones they're not telling you."

< Bill Marentette's bar made from the front counter of the Bermuda Export Co.

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David Morris

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12:30pm - Shaymus the
Story Teller
1:30pm - Voyageur
Jean Baptist Dumont,
monologue by actor
David Morris
3:30pm - Battle
5:00pm - Close

SUNDAY, MAY 29

Open 10:00am -
Museum Tour
11:00am - Battle
12:30pm - Shaymus the
Story Teller
1:30pm - Chief
Tecumseh, monologue
by actor David Morris
3:30pm - Battle
5:00pm - Close

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Ontario

A Taste of Essex County

The Pursuit of Flavour

By Laurie Brett

Chef Dennis Sanson and his partner Maureen Jack are working on a new recipe. Mix a passion for food and wine with a healthy heap of determination. Add an abundance of respect for the land and a whole lot of insight into the hospitality industry. Blend everything together on a hundred acres of land located just south of McGregor, and serve in a warm and friendly environment.

On a cold February morning, the rich aroma of vegetable beef stew wafts through the retail store at Sanson Estate Winery. Bottle-lined walls share space with cans of Thompson's beans and Utopia-brand tomatoes from Maidstone's Thomas Canning. In the banquet hall at the back, large pots of fresh rosemary bask in the windows along the southern exposure, while casks of wine two barrels high rest in the shadows, evidence of Sanson's wintertime blending exercises.

It's clear that this is not a one-dimensional operation.

In better weather, Sanson explains, baco noir and vidal blanc grapes ripen in the vineyard, while heirloom tomatoes, squashes and peppers thrive in the vegetable garden and top quality cattle and heritage pork breeds, like Berkshire and Tamworth, graze in nearby fields. The livestock and produce share the property with eight acres of wetlands and thirty-four acres of reclaimed and naturalized land.

"Our businesses are rooted in a very strong sense of place and the place that we are has a lot of features, both agriculturally and naturally – environmentally," says Sanson. "We exist in a significant part of the county and in a very significant watershed and so we shoulder those responsibilities and treat that portion of our overall operation with the same importance that we do the way we grow and make wine, the way we grow and sell food. It's a real balancing act."

Growing his business is also part of that act. Cooperative ventures with other like-minded producers have culminated in a fledgling project called "From Field to Fork". The trademarked initiative includes a one-stop retail food store that offers unique items – food and wine of a quality that consumers simply can't find in most supermarkets. It's a work in progress that Sanson hopes will someday include an old-fashioned butcher shop.

With thirty years of experience as a professional chef and ten years in the world of commercial wine production, however, Sanson is mindful of the challenges ahead.

"There's a media position that suggests there's this outstanding economic growth associated with wineries," he says. "We need to be really clear and factual... what do we have, what are others doing as best practices, how can we consolidate or make use of these resources and overall lead to regional economic development?"

Sanson believes that economic growth must be viewed from the perspective of sustainability.

"Sustainable first of all means that people know what you're doing, like what you're doing and want what you're doing," he says.

Sanson believes in getting closer to the end user. He doesn't want to sell commodities, he says. He wants to sell food to people.

"Where we're having a problem in the beef industry – most certainly in the United States – is we have the idea that people want to buy cheap, lots of cheap food of this quality, so we produce it and get you to buy it, as opposed to listening to what you like and trying to produce it. It's a different mindset."

Careful thought and analysis seem to go into everything Sanson does. Although "the pursuit of flavour" continues to be his overriding mission, he says his perspective on food has shifted over time.

"I used to believe good food takes time," he says. "Now I believe good food takes thought."

BBQ Beef Roast

Serves 8

This is a great fuss-free spring and summer roast. Just rub, roast and relax! Cook it for weekend visitors and enjoy any leftovers during the week for sandwiches.

Select a 4-pound premium Ontario boneless beef roast from the rib or loin.

Rub with a mixture of:

- 1/2 cup Spanish paprika
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons chopped Ontario garlic
- 3 tablespoons onion powder
- 2 tablespoons oregano
- 1 tablespoon coarse sea salt

For a value-priced option, select an outside round, inside round, sirloin tip, or cross rib and marinate for 12 to 24 hours in:

- 1/2 cup each soy sauce and rice vinegar
- 1/4 cup Ontario liquid honey
- 1 tablespoon hot sauce
- 2 teaspoons each sesame oil and finely shredded ginger root

Wine pairings

Maureen Jack recommends pairing BBQ Beef Roast with Sanson's Bird Dog Red 2005, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot, or their Baco Noir 2007.

The secret to this recipe is to get a uniform shaped roast, barbecue to no more than medium, and slice thinly to serve.

You don't need a fancy barbecue to enjoy barbecue beef roast. If you don't have a rotisserie, you can cook the roast right on the grill by using indirect heat roasting.

With Rotisserie:

Place drip pan, containing 1/2 inch water, under grill. Preheat barbecue to medium-high (400°F/200°C). Insert spit rod lengthwise through centre of roast; secure with holding forks and place roast over drip pan.

Without Rotisserie:

For indirect heat roasting, place drip pan under grill on one side of a 2-burner barbecue. Heat barbecue to approx. 400°F (200°C) with lid closed. Turn off burner under drip pan. Place roast on grill over unlit burner and roast at constant heat with lid closed. For a 3-burner barbecue, place drip pan and roast in centre of barbecue.

Cook at constant heat, in closed barbecue, allowing 25 minutes cooking time per pound. Roast is done when internal temperature reaches 155°F or 68°C for medium. Remove to wood cutting board, tent with aluminum foil and let stand 10 to 15 minutes before slicing thinly.

If you are a novice BBQ cook, go to www.beefinfo.org/?ID=17&ArticleID=72&SecID=6 for step-by-step instructions and additional information on using cooking thermometers.

Recipe courtesy of Dennis Sanson and Sanson Estate Winery





What's The Point?

Park and Paradise converge at Point Pelee

By Andy Comber

A vast ice field extends to the horizon as far as the eye can see. A delicate green blanket of growth emerges from the forest floor. Water sparkles in waves reaching sun-drenched sands. Landscapes in new colours, skies filled with wings in flight.

These are not places at the four corners of the Earth. These are the seasons of Point Pelee National Park.

Point Pelee, or "The Point" as it is affectionately known, contains a large part of the natural area of Essex County – a patchwork of marsh, forest, fields, and beaches teeming with life. All this is packed into a small fifteen-square-kilometre triangle of land that juts out into Lake Erie.

The Point has a human history.

Humankind has inhabited the region for thousands of years – the proof recorded in stone arrowheads, spear points and fragments of clay pottery. Point Pelee is "our home" to the Caldwell First Nations and "part of our house" to the Walpole Island First Nation – compelling descriptions illustrating its importance.

Each season at the Point offers something new to the human experience.

Sarah Rupert, a senior park interpreter, was introduced to Point Pelee by her parents, avid birders who made numerous pilgrimages to the park during her youth.

"It's always changing – 365 days a year," Rupert says.

Many of the regular visitors to the park come from the surrounding region, but for many local residents, decades may separate their visits.

"We get a lot of people who have not been here since a school field trip," she says. "Then, twenty years later they come back and say 'Wow, everything's changed' – or – 'Wow, nothing's changed' – there are both sides to the memories."

Bird migration was the reason Point Pelee became a national park in 1918. More than 380 species have been recorded in the park boundaries.

Spring and fall are the premier seasons for the migration, but birds frequent the park in all seasons. Eastern bluebirds and savannah sparrows fly the grassy meadows. Red-winged black birds, ducks and herons make their home in the marshes. Warblers and wild turkeys reside along the woodland trail.

For the keen eye, there may be a sighting of one of the park's nesting bald eagles – or a brown pelican, blown far from its southern home on the winds of a hurricane. In the autumn, a different migration – Monarch butterflies briefly linger on their 3,000-kilometre journey to Mexico.

Enhancing people's sense of discovery and connection to nature at the Point is the task of Karen Linauskas, manager of visitor experience.

Many kilometres of trails offer adventure in all seasons, Linauskas says.

"There are trails for hiking, biking and cross-country skiing – and footpaths – narrow one-person trails that offer a little more adventure."

Each trail offers its own experiences, ones that change with the seasons.

A boardwalk winds through the expanse of the large cattail marshes, where turtles bask in the summer sun. Paths explore the open fields. Cedar savannah and swamp forest surround an old homestead – a reminder of days-gone-by when humankind tried to tame the wilderness. Woodland trails, framed by over seventy species of trees, allow a view of the home of raccoons, coyote, deer, squirrels and countless birds.

For the less adventurous, a remarkable interpretive centre offers interactive displays, nature films, and a discovery area for children. In spring, summer and fall, a shuttle offers transportation to within a short walk of the tip of the ever-changing Point.

Ten years ago, the tip stretched for a kilometre out into the lake, a sandy trail surrounded by water. In recent years, plagued by storm and high waters, it has performed a disappearing act. But, in all seasons, it remains the southernmost point of mainland Canada.

"For a lot of people that is the key attraction – to stand at the tip of Canada," says Linauskas.

Organized activities at the Point are offered in all seasons.

Bike and canoe rentals become available in April, an opportunity for personal exploration on path or pond through summer and into autumn.


Like voyageurs of the past, large groups of people can explore the marvels of the marsh in the comfort of a freighter canoe, encountering interesting plants, frogs, birds, turtles and dragonflies.

Visitors enjoy butterfly counts in August, Monarch mysteries in September, creatures of the night in October, bird counts in December, and an owl prowling in February.

Surrounded by Lake Erie, the shores of the Point offer a playground of sand and water, stretching for several kilometres.

There are remarkable vistas in all seasons.

The dawning sun rises over the marsh in the mists of a spring morning. A summer storm darkens the horizon, lightning connecting cloud to water with electrical fireworks. Waters like glass mirror the sky in an autumn calm. A red sun sinks into an Arctic-like landscape in the cold of winter. Offshore there is history, adventure and legend in the inland seas.



An illustrated sign along a west beach trail tells the true story of the wooden steamer Conemaugh, which sank in the Pelee Passage during a violent gale on Nov. 22, 1906. The vessel hit the shoals with such force that most of her propeller blades were broken off by the impact. Fortunately for the crew, a lifesaving station was located at Pelee.

"It would have been utterly impossible to launch an ordinary boat and it was only after the third effort that the lifeboat got away manned by seven men," stated an article in a 1906 Windsor Evening Record. "It made three trips before it got the whole 22 men ashore."

Today, divers come to explore the remains of the Conemaugh and fifty other known wrecks in the Pelee Passage. This is the resting place for over two hundred

and fifty ships.

There are no signs to direct your vision for more legendary sightings.

Perhaps if you scan the waters, however, you might spot Bessie – Lake Erie's famed lake monster. If you see her, you'll be joining the crew of a schooner who reported a serpent-like creature 30- to 40-feet in length in July 1817.

With the future in mind, a new park management plan is currently being developed to provide a long-term vision for Point Pelee as an oasis of nature, a place of history and a tourist destination.

For park superintendent Marian Stranak, the challenge is finding a balance between protection and experience.

"The park is two-thirds marsh. That means almost all the (human) activity takes place on one-third of its area and that

includes the tip," Stranak says. "We get over 200,000 visitors a year and many of those people want to stand on the very tip of Canada."

"We have three elements to our mandate – protection, visitor experience and public education. That is where the real challenge is to managing the park."

Care and respect will be needed from all visitors to Point Pelee to preserve Essex County's most amazing paradise and park.

Skis glide over the snow-covered path. Eyes turn to the skies, following flocks of birds. A couple walks barefoot in the surf of an inland sea. Fallen leaves crunch under the hiker's boot.

These are not places at the four corners of the Earth. These are the seasons of Point Pelee National Park.

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All About BOOKS

The Pitch: Business Lessons Learned on the Soccer Field

Linda J. Lord

Local Author!

A sports analogy for business

By Jennifer Cranston

The Pitch is a fast-paced, easy read that tells the story of a single mom and entrepreneur who turns her life around.

Liz Robertson is broke. Her relationship with her teenaged son is as rocky as her business. The story begins with Liz reluctantly getting out of bed to face what is sure to be a difficult and miserable day. But, just when her personal and professional lives are at a breaking point, she finds wisdom and hope in the words of her son's soccer coach.

Local business coach Linda J. Lord, successfully draws a parallel between playing competitive sport and running a successful business while enjoying your personal life.

"Dress for the weather," "find a mentor" and "first win the game in your head," are some of the life lessons that Liz discovers can be applied to her life. This struggling businesswoman begins to apply the principles she picks up while hanging out at soccer practice only to discover that something is still missing from her approach.

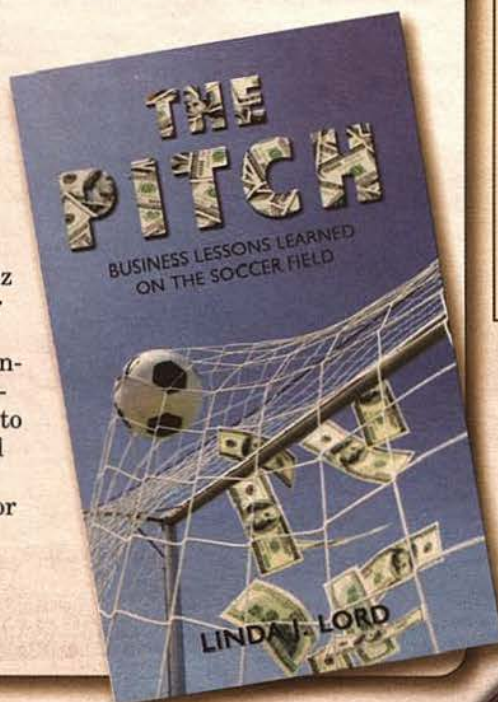
It isn't until her new mentor helps Liz to explore her own motives and desires that she finds a winning strategy and gets her life back on track.

"People's professional performance is only as good as the strength of their personal foundation," Lord explains.

The Pitch illustrates how different aspects of our lives are interdependent and explores the challenge of finding balance.

This book draws on Lord's personal experiences to create a believable parable with effective advice that is easy to apply.

The Pitch is available at Indigo bookstore in Tecumseh and through Lord's website www.lindajlord.com. It is available in paperback and e-book formats for \$15.



Finding Bill

Henrietta T. O'Neill

Local Author!

Reviewed by
Connie-Jean Latam

Finding Bill is a true story of sacrifice, devotion and remembrance that invokes the cliché, "Truth is stranger than fiction."

This fascinating book takes you to Holland during World War Two. Bill O'Neill, a Canadian soldier, is billeted in the home of Antonia and Hendrikus den Otter. The young Dutch couple learns about the Canadian lifestyle, as well as the struggles and successes of Bill and other soldiers like him who are serving to free Holland.

Local author, Henrietta O'Neill, the sixth-born child of the Den Otter family, connects the reader with Bill O'Neill on a personal level, by sharing Bill's and her family's loving and sacrificial tales in a way that captivates the heart and soul.

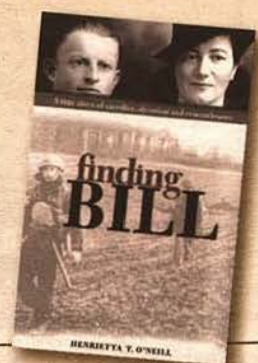
Bill enmeshes the family profoundly for generations and decades. His effect on them is so deep that the family immigrates to Canada and years later searches for Bill in

order to have closure on their life connection.

This is a great book to read for its depiction of a time of great turbulence and how a loving devotion for Canadians and each other would evolve – so much so, that one can understand the attachment that comes about.

Life changing? Yes, indeed. How many times have you had someone walk into your life and change it forever? This book will help you to reflect on the life-changing person in your life.

Connie-Jean Latam is a Doctor of Natural Medicine and the author of *Everything is Food! Words of Wisdom from a Small Child*.



Dracula: The Un-Dead

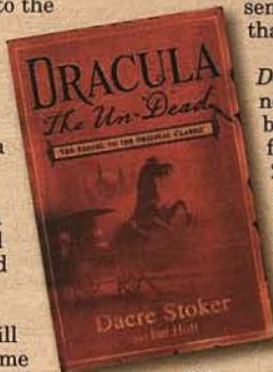
Dacre Stoker and Ian Holt

Reviewed by
Annette Gabriele

One hundred and twelve years later, Bram Stoker's great grand-nephew has re-opened the family crypt, with the help of Dracula historian Ian Holt, to bring to the page the sequel to the classic gothic novel, *Dracula*.

Come and meet an adult, naive Quincey, son of Dracula's beloved Mina Harker, as the torches of old are reignited and we (the Dracula fans) start a new quest with the "band of heroes" to rid the world of Dracula.

Arthur still pines for Lucy, and Van Helsing still spits as he speaks the name "Dracula". All our old friends are still peering cautiously around corners expecting to encounter an evil vampire, and they do!



Beware traditional Dracula lovers, for Jack the Ripper and Elizabeth Bathory have been written into the plot and provide some most bloody and disturbing scenes. I was pleased with this fusion, as it gives the book a more modern, sensational feeling than its predecessor.

Dracula: The Un-Dead seems to be a novel about bringing back to life all those favourite characters 25 years after the seeming end at Castle Dracula. Bram Stoker himself even makes a cameo appearance in this fast-paced mix of fact and fiction, but let go of the past and dare to enjoy!

Annette Gabriele works in acquisitions at the Essex County Library.

Catching Fire

Suzanne Collins

Reviewed By
Elly Takaki

My husband and I have very different reading tastes, but when he started emotionally exclaiming at random times that he couldn't wait for the next book in a young adult series, I was intrigued. I soon understood his torment when I read *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, and its sequel, *Catching Fire*. Now I'm tormented by the six-month waiting period before the third book in the trilogy is published.

The plot of *The Hunger Games* has been described as "Gladiator" meets "Project Runway". Collins quickly pulls us into the world of Panem, a post-apocalyptic America ruled by a brutal, wealthy government referred to as "the Capitol." The sixteen-year-old protagonist, Katniss Everdeen, is chosen to participate in the Hunger Games, a competition in which teenagers must fight each other to the death. Each year, all twelve districts must send one boy and one girl, called "tributes," to



compete in the televised bloodbath as punishment for a previous attempt at revolution.

Without giving too much away for those who haven't read the first book, *Catching Fire* hikes up the stakes for Katniss. Because of her actions in the first novel, she is now fighting, not just for her own survival, but for everyone she loves. The action is relentless and the characters are so engaging

that you come to relish spending time in this dark, futuristic world. Katniss Everdeen is smart, resourceful, and brave. Her fellow tribute, Peeta Mellark, becomes a character you fall in love with, while you wait to see if Katniss ever will. Stephen King declared *The Hunger Games* as addictive as a video game, and Stephanie Meyer confessed she brought the book out to dinner with her and read it under the table because she couldn't stop. Though Collins writes for children and young adults, adult readers will be just as enthralled with this blend of sci-fi, adventure, and romance.

Elly Takaki is Branch Supervisor at McGregor Public Library.

The Best Laid Plans

Terry Fallis

Reviewed by
Lynda Schlichther

Meet Daniel Addison, a 32-year-old Ph.D. of Canadian Literature (University of Ottawa). Life is pretty good for Daniel; he has lived with his knockout girlfriend, Rachel Bronwin, for two years now and he is a speechwriter for the Leader of the Liberal Party.

Just when life is going so good it comes to a crashing halt for Daniel. He discovers Rachel has another relationship with Dick Warrington, Opposition House Leader. Daniel resigns from his position and gets a job teaching undergraduate English at the U of O, but not before making a promise to the Liberal Leader – to find a Liberal candidate for the riding of Cumberland-Prescott and then manage the campaign. How hard could it be?

Meet the Honorable Eric Cameron, Cumberland-Prescott Tory stronghold Leader. He is young, good-looking, widowed, and blessed with eloquence in giving speeches – in short, the complete package. Oh, and did I mention, he is the most popular Finance Minister in Canadian history?

Meet Muriel Parkinson, the previous Cumberland-Prescott Liberal candidate for the last five elections. Muriel has worked for the Liberals since becoming secre-

tary for Mackenzie King during WWII. She is Liberal to the core. She is 81 years old, has Parkinson's disease and lives in a senior's home after breaking her hip two years ago. While Muriel's disease may have slowed her down physically, her intelligence, wit and reasoning is still strong.

Meet Angus McIntock – Scottish immigrant, landlord, Mechanical Engineering professor and stellar chess player. For 25 years this 60-year-old man has been teaching at U of O.

He is well spoken and takes delight in the English language. However, when he receives word he is to teach English for Engineers for a second consecutive year, he declares, "I cannae do it!" and makes a deal with Daniel.

The Deal – Daniel will teach his E for E class and he, in turn, will let his name stand as Liberal candidate for the riding of Cumberland-Prescott. A win-win deal – or is it?

The hilarity begins! Terry Fallis tells a tale that is clever, enlightening, witty and sometimes absurd. His characters are people you care about, and the storyline will keep you hooked. Mr. Fallis is winner of The Stephen Leacock Award for Humour for his Canadian view of Ottawa's political culture. Bravo!

Lynda Schlichther is an avid reader and member of the Essex Public Library's Book Club.



Spotlight on Essex County would like to thank the following people and organizations:

- Margaret McMaster, branch assistant at Essex Public Library, for putting us in touch with library staff and book club members who have contributed to this issue's book reviews.
- Brian Sweet and South Coast Writers for communicating our request for book reviewers to members of the group.

If you love to read and also have a passion for scribbling, jotting or earnestly composing notes about your best-loved books, please contact *Spotlight* publisher Laurie Brett at 519-776-4268 or email us at essexfreepress@onaibn.com. Book reviews of fiction (adult and young adult published in the last two years) must be pre-approved and should run around 250 words.



The Blue Room

— A Journal from the Farthest Corner

By Micheal Laverty

Harley Stromberg walked in and hesitated at the top of the staircase. I could see that he was nervous, almost as if he knew what was waiting for him, below. Harley stepped into The Blue Room, one desperate stair after another until reaching scarred wooden floor. He had a look of restrained terror on his face, the face of someone who is not sure what they are afraid of yet, as he noticed the empty stage to his left and turned towards the bar. His name wasn't on the bill and the band already had a lead guitarist. The entire evening had been arranged for him. I jotted down a few notes and begged him not to disappoint us.

The jukebox was playing songs from Harley's childhood. Old and familiar melodies created a backdrop for the noise of the patrons. The notes carried over the metallic rafters above our heads and then escaped through the ceiling into nothingness. I could see how he was immediately affected by the atmosphere of the room, even though he wouldn't look at anyone. Everyone who visits this place for the first time tries to hide their face.

We were all watching, waiting for the performance to begin. Harley cautiously took his place at the bar and tried to get the bartender's attention. We thought he'd be here months ago but a mistake had been made. In the time it took for him to finally arrive, our table had discussed why it had taken him so long to visit our bar. The farthest corner was reserved for the regulars. We had all played with the band and would play again, many times. We knew the setlist well.

I had known Harley long before he appeared that night. A father of three children, he had worked the same job for over thirty years. The career had been fulfilling for his body and soul. Harley always said that life would never be perfect but this world has much to offer, if you're willing to work for it. That night, if he decided to play, Harley would discover the depths of his personal philosophy among the exhaustion of the early morning. His wife was probably searching for him, wondering where he was hiding.

Harley wrapped his feet tightly around the rungs of his stool and tapped his fingers on the glass surface impatiently. The bartender leaned in and took his order. A tall glass of beer was brought to Harley a minute later. He didn't talk to the people sitting beside him.

They whispered amongst themselves and anticipated the performance.

I could see that he was wondering

why the voices had quieted themselves. The life he lived and the people he knew were not easily forgotten down here. Instead he saw their faces. The eyes, lips, nose, and cheek bones of every person he loved formed within his mind. I'd seen this happen many times before and would witness it again. He knew our eyes were watching him from the darkness and he searched the room for any trace of light.

Our walls are decorated with the honoured guests of the past. If Harley could see them he would have noticed his family tree sharing space with memorials to Albert King and Chuck Berry. His ancestors played here long before I arrived. They were the only friends he had that night. I'm not sure why it had to be that way, why Harley sat alone and apart from us. Someone was speaking to him though. If he listened closely he would've heard the echoes of pain, joy, love, and despair carved into the walls.

An empty stool stood upon the stage. It waited for everything and nothing at all in the same moment. Four thin legs rested upon the floorboards, a flat wooden surface barely visible in the dwindling light. His place, a shadowy plane which stretched beyond the raised stage, stood in front of him. The house lights went down. Harley pushed his glass to the side and tried to take a slow breath. A series of overhead bulbs lit up a path leading from the stool on which he sat to the beckoning stage. A hush could be heard all around, our hearts beat and echoed inside the walls. Harley knew why he was here.

The bartender leaned in close, placed a hand on Harley's forearm and pointed towards the stage. Harley could no longer ignore the fact that everyone was staring at him from their tables. All he could hear was the sound of a hundred people whispering about his salvation. He stood up, adjusted his shirt, and walked towards the stage.

Harley noticed a group of figures moving and shifting behind the amplifiers and drum kit. A man emerged from the darkness holding a white Les Paul guitar and offered it to him. For a few seconds the man stood there, arms outstretched in front of him, supporting the weight of the instrument. Harley took hold of the neck first and cradled his other arm around the body. The density of the wood made his hands tremble. The guitar was in his grasp and the man stepped back to join the other musicians. Harley could see that the audience was cast in a pale blue light. Streaks of white rained like dust in a sunlit window and obscured

his vision. A hum of voices from the crowd held a steady note behind a twelve-bar blues progression, which gently cycled back on itself.

Harley touched the smooth top of the guitar and watched as the light reflected off the curving, lacquered finish. He moved the dials back and forth. There was no sound. He had to plug himself in. The cord dangled over the speaker, the golden transmitter shone in the spotlights. He would have to connect, create the divine circuit and enter the stream. Harley took the jack in his left hand and held it above the input. It hovered inches from the silver plate.

I couldn't understand why he hesitated, the band was waiting. We were waiting. Somewhere, from above perhaps, voices could be heard, the faint call from the other side. The instruments of surgeons cut into his body and someone began pulling him away from the stage. Harley closed his eyes and squeezed the cord in his hands. The intense white glare dissolved and the room returned to its natural blue. It was over. He was gone.

The soul of Harley Stromberg is still scheduled to play. They've already found someone to replace him. He won't be a part of the band this night, but he will one day—and maybe you can join us.



Micheal Laverty is enrolled in his first year of a Master of Arts in Creative Writing at the University of Windsor and completed a writing degree through Humber College's School for Writer's program in April 2009. He has recently published a short story in the latest issue of The Maple Tree Literary Supplement.

Poetry

Humbled under Heavens

Lightning took the morning stage
speaking with its thunder
impressing me to awe
electrifying power
that capable of only God
from misty shroud
expectations
stilled my breath
while above
light shot from cloud to cloud
air charged by fire
rich in wonder
rain soaked
I did not care
humbled under heavens
with lightning everywhere

PERFECT art

You shield me against hurt
forgetting your own pain
tending to me with your words
thoughtful of all, but your gain
Distance forgotten
you hold me
the embrace strong with Love
true as any friend could be
You are cherished
more than you know
you are beautiful
a jewel in life's ebb and flow
a humble soul
Born of a caring heart
if friends could be sculptured
you'd be perfect art.

CANOE ing

with gentle wind
my companion
I drift away in thought
the dip of the paddle
the only sound
on quiet stream
I find peace
a sense of worth
a star in nature's scheme
content
deep clear thoughts
like these waters
soothe me
all ripples left behind
troubles forgotten
I am calmed like child
in this cradle
my canoe
that sets my spirit free

Essex Free Press Editor Andy Comber is not only a fantastic photographer and accomplished journalist, but he's also a closet poet. To encourage our readers to share their written works, Andy gamely offered up some of his hitherto unpublished poems for your enjoyment. If you would like your poetry or short fiction to be considered for inclusion in a future issue of *Spotlight on Essex County*, please contact publisher Laurie Brett at 519-776-4268 or email us at essexfreepress@on.aibn.com.

We'd love to hear from you!

love Fades

Let me fade like the distant light of a star
and leave the burden to the dark of night
when pain veils my soul, my heart taken far
then shall the heaven hold my silent light
Constant as is time, there will be my place
gentle sleep eternal, nestled in the sky
with comfort found now fallen from the race
there in peace fate takes the men that die
Let me live in your thoughts, with your care
forgotten to those that left a world torn
and lifted by those with kindness to share
and over the troubled waters to be born
Let me fade quiet, unafraid of the cold
let my spirit rest within your loving hold

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Bringing back the GOBBLE and GLIDE

Essex County's comeback critters

By Andy Comber

The hunter raised his gun and fired.

It was 1907 and there on the shores of Lake Erie lay the remains of the last wild turkey in Southern Ontario.

Eastern wild turkeys once ranged all over North America, east of the Mississippi River and throughout Southern Ontario and Quebec, their numbers in the millions. By the late 19th century much of their habitat had been destroyed, the land cleared for settlement and farming. By 1909 big city market hunters and poachers had wiped them out in Ontario.

Some twenty years later, another animal would vanish, not entirely from the province, but from Essex County. It was the flying squirrel.

Loss of habitat worked against this woodland dweller. By the late 1920s, the forest coverage in Essex County had shrunk to just three per cent of the land area. Dead trees, the home and shelter for flying squirrels, were often removed from woodlots. Exposed and unsheltered, many flying squirrels fell prey to feral cats as human settlement closed in around them.

Out of this dark history there is a story of triumph – a second chance for the flying squirrel and the wild turkey in Essex County. Ironically, hunters would be among the conservationists and other volunteers who would bring the wild turkey back to life for our province – and our county.

Our wild turkey success story begins in the United States. There, sportsmen and conservationists brought the wild turkey back from the brink of extinction by increasing its numbers from about 30,000 birds in the 1920s to over 1.3 million in 1973.

Before long, Ontario outdoors groups began looking at reintroducing the wild turkey to its Canadian range. In the early 1980s the Ministry of Natural Resources partnered with the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and the Ontario Federation of Hunters and Anglers to pursue that goal. The problem – wild birds were needed to guarantee success.

A unique solution was found in a wildlife swap program. Michigan needed our moose, Missouri needed our river otters, New York needed our partridge and Ontario needed their wild turkeys. From 1984 to 1987, Ontario received 274 eastern wild turkeys from several American states.

The first wild turkeys to be returned to Ontario were 27 Missouri birds that were released in the central areas of the province, part of their historic range.

The wild birds adapted quickly to their new home and flourished. By 1985, populations were high enough to support the "trap and transfer" of established wild turkeys to other areas of the province.

Essex County's efforts to bring back the gobble started in the winter of 1997-98.

Now a stewardship coordinator, Don Hector was a management biologist for the MNR involved in the release of wild turkeys in Southern Ontario. Hector says Essex County was one of the last areas considered for turkey releases due to its small area of natural cover.

"Priority was based on forest cover," he says.

Earlier trap and transfer guidelines called for at least 10 per cent forest cover, interspersed with agricultural lands. Essex County was "a hard sell." It only has about seven per cent natural cover even today, he explains.

Hector says the determined efforts of volunteers, conservation groups, field and sportsmen clubs, and "a whole range of people" encouraged success, but there was another resilient element in the reintroduction program that would guarantee it – the eastern wild turkey.

"They are a pretty hardy bird," Hector says. "They surprised people. They did well and their numbers expanded."

That first winter in 1997-98, 17 birds were released in the Big Creek area outside Amherstburg. Hector attended releases. It was "a rewarding experience" seeing the entire flock set loose simultaneously from large waxed-cardboard boxes.

More releases followed, usually in flocks – also called rafters. Seventeen to 25 birds were released in natural areas in the River Canard and Cedar Creek watersheds and in the Hillman Marsh area near Leamington.

According to the MNR, over 100 wild turkeys were released in this region from 1998 to 2005.

Wild turkeys are flourishing in Essex County and across the province. A 2007 survey estimated there were 80,000 to 100,000 birds in Ontario.

Now, thanks to tight regulations, monitoring and management, hunters are again able to hunt the wild turkey in some areas of Ontario – and the gobble remains.

Being one of the largest game birds in North America, there is a good chance of seeing a rafter of turkeys during a drive through the county.

Chances of seeing the nocturnal flying squirrel are not so good.

While wild turkeys were being released in Essex County, the reintroduction of the flying squirrel into Point Pelee National Park was already being celebrated.

Once abundant at Point Pelee, the southern flying squirrel disappeared from the park in the 1930s. Human development had claimed much of the old growth trees used by the squirrels for climbing and gliding. Considered unsightly, dead trees were also removed. Unfortunately they were home to the flying squirrels.

Leonardo Cabrera, an ecosystem scientist at Point Pelee, says that the park was created in 1918, but cottages and farms occupied much of the land. He says it took decades to restore the park's habitat so that it could support an attempted return of the flying squirrel.

"There was a huge effort to restore the forest," says Cabrera.

Professor Thomas Nudds and graduate students from the University of Guelph started working with the park in the early 1990s to bring the flying squirrels back. Flying squirrels were collected from 16 woodlots in the Long Point and St. Catharines areas of Ontario for transfer to Point Pelee.

"From 1993 to 1994, 99 flying squirrels were released in the park," Cabrera explains. "Nesting boxes were put in place to provide a home and shelter."

The number of flying squirrels dropped at first, but recovered to a number estimated to be over 200 in 1999. Because of the nocturnal nature of the flying squirrel, it is difficult to get accurate counts.

Challenges remain for the flying squirrel. Cabrera says they are adapting to a "less-than-ideal" habitat in a maturing forest and are still preyed upon by the odd feral cat.

"It may be necessary to have another release," Cabrera says. "New nesting boxes might be needed too, until the forest matures."

The flying squirrel is not a true flier. It glides from tree to tree using furry membranes called patagium that are attached between the front and back feet.

"The flying squirrel is a beautiful design of nature," says Cabrera.

The wild turkey has found its way to the woodlands of Point Pelee, but the flying squirrel is unlikely to spread out into the county due to the lack of connecting forests and woodlots.

Essex County was once covered in a dense and mature Carolinian forest that was home to many animals.

"Today Essex County has one of the lowest amounts of natural cover, second only to Chatham-Kent," says Dan Lebedyk, a conservation biologist with the Essex Region Conservation Authority.

"There is not enough habitat to sustain the species that once called Essex County their home," he says. "You can't reintroduce animals before restoring the habitat."

There is about seven per cent natural cover in Essex County, a good portion of that within Point Pelee National Park. That remains far below the 12 per cent natural cover recommended by the United Nations for a sustainable community.

"What natural area we have left is the most significant in the province and the country," says Lebedyk.

Efforts are underway through tree planting and stewardship programs to connect the existing natural areas in the county. That is encouraging for the wild turkeys and flying squirrels – and the future of nature's gobble and glide in Essex County.

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SPOTLIGHT

on your thoughts



Congratulations on your magazine – it looks awesome. I read it from cover to cover and found it to be inspirational, educational, and motivating. The stories on the young man who is visually impaired and the one on the writer's group were very interesting. This wonderful publication shows that print is alive and well.

Fred Groves

I am a senior and an avid reader and just received Spotlight on Essex County. I found it very interesting and the items were exceptionally good reading. Just want to congratulate you on a job very well done.

Marieta Brew

We want to complement you on your first issue of Spotlight on Essex County. We thoroughly enjoyed all of the articles. As well as being interesting and informative, they were written in such a way as to hold interest in reading the whole thing.

Ron and Elaine Seguin



Just received your Spotlight on Essex County and must tell you how impressed I was. Far from being the puff piece that some of the Windsor business mags are, yours is a serious journalistic and literary work that celebrates our county's abundant and varied interests.

Everything about the magazine says class. The photography, composition, and artwork are visually stimulating, and even the ads are integrated into the page without being intrusive.

What I admired especially was the selection of articles – so diverse, well researched, lucid and written with style. From the contemporary concerns with wind power, to crime, to writers, to sports, to soldiers, to naturalists, etcetera, you hit all the high notes.

Congratulations! Keep them coming.

Tony Nespolon



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